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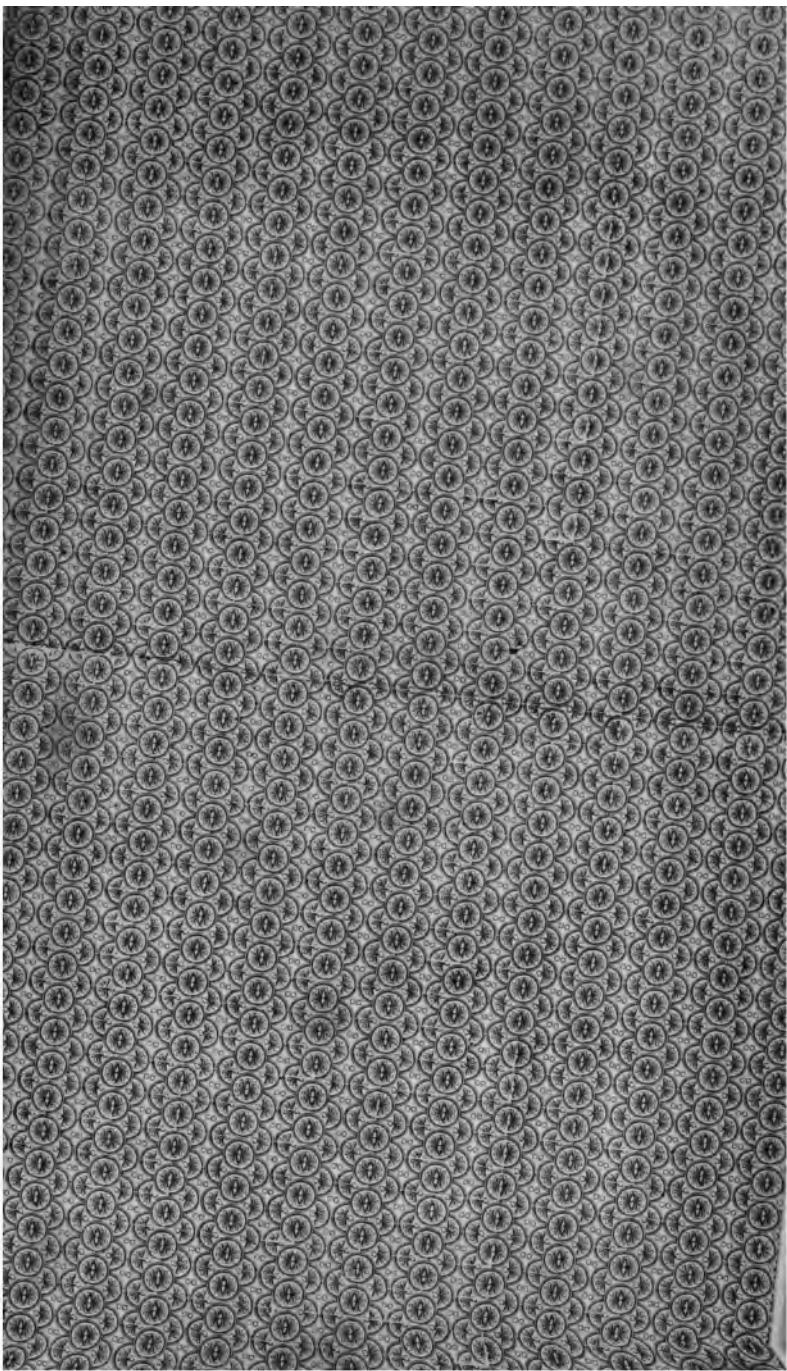


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F R A N K F O R E S T E R

AND

HIS FRIENDS;

OR,

W O O D L A N D A D V E N T U R E S

IN THE

Middle States of North America.

HENRY WILLIAM HERBERT,

AUTHOR OF

"FIELD SPORTS IN THE UNITED STATES," "MARMADUKE WYVIL," ETC.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

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THE
WARWICK WOODLANDS.

ON A SECOND VISIT.

THE OUTLYING STAG.

IT was still pitch dark, although the skies were quite clear and cloudless, when Harry, Frank, and the Commodore reassembled on the following morning in Tom's best parlour, preparatory to the stag hunt, which, as determined on the previous night, was to be their first sporting move in the valley.

Early, however, as it was, Timothy had contrived to make a glorious fire upon the hearth, and to lay out a slight breakfast of biscuits, butter, and cold beef, flanked by a square case bottle of Jamaica, and a huge jorum of boiled milk. Tom Draw had not yet made his appearance, but the sound of his ponderous tramp, mixed with strange

oaths and loud vociferations, showed that he was on foot and ready for the field.

“ I ’ll tell you what, Master A——,” said Archer, as he stood with his back to the fire, mixing some rum with sugar and cold water, previous to pouring the hot milk into it; “ you ’ll be so cold in that light jacket on the stand this morning, that you ’ll never be able to hold your gun true, if you get a shot. It froze quite hard last night, and there ’s some wind, too, this morning.”

“ That ’s very true,” replied the Commodore, “ but devil a thing have I got else to wear, unless I put on my great-coat, and that ’s too much the other way—too big and clumsy altogether. I shall do well enough, I dare say; and after all, my drilling jacket is not much thinner than your fustian.”

“ No,” said Harry; “ but you don’t fancy that I’m going out in this, do you? No, no! I’m too old a hand for that sort of thing—I know that to shoot well a man must be comfortable, and I mean to be so. Why, man, I shall put on my Canadian hunting shirt over this”—and with the word he slipped a loose frock, shaped much like a wagoner’s smock or a Flemish blouse, over his head, with

large full sleeves, reaching almost to his knees, and belted round his waist by a broad worsted sash. This excellent garment was composed of a thick coarse homespun woollen, bottle-green in colour, with fringe and bindings of dingy red, to match the sash about his waist. From the sash was suspended an otter-skin pouch, containing bullets and patches, nipple wrench and turn-screw, a bit of dry tow, an oiled rag, and all the indispensables for rifle cleaning; while into it were thrust two knives—one a broad two-edged implement, with a stout buck-horn haft, and a blade of at least twelve inches; the other a much smaller weapon, not being, hilt and all, half the length of the other's blade, but very strong, sharp as a razor, and of surpassing temper. While he was fitting all these in their proper places, and sling-ing under his left arm a small buffalo horn of powder, he continued talking—"Now," he said, "if you take my advice, you'll go into my room, and there, hanging against the wall, you'll find my winter shooting jacket; I had it made last year when I went up to Maine, of pilot cloth, lined throughout with flannel. It will fit you just as well as your own, for we're pretty much of a size.

Frank, there, will wear his old monkey jacket, the skirts of which he razeed last winter for the very purpose. Ah, here is Brower—Just run up, Brower, and bring down my shooting jacket off the wall from behind the door ; look sharp, will you ? Now, then, I shall load, and I advise you both to do likewise ; for it 's bad work doing that same with cold fingers."

Thus saying, he walked to the corner, and brought out his rifle, a heavy single barrel, carrying a ball of eighteen to the pound, quite plain, but exquisitely finished. Before proceeding, however, to load, he tried the passage of the nipple with a fine needle—three or four of which, thrust into a cork, and headed with sealing-wax, formed a portion of the contents of his pouch—brushed the cone and the inside of the hammer carefully, and wiped them, to conclude, with a small piece of clean white kid ; then measuring his powder out exactly, into a little charger screwed to the end of his ramrod, he inverted the piece, and introduced the rod upward till the cup reached the chamber ; when, righting the gun, he withdrew it, leaving the powder all lodged safely at the breech, without the loss of a single grain in the groovings.

Next, he chose out a piece of leather, the finest grained kid, without a seam or wrinkle, slightly greased with the best watch-maker's oil—selected a ball perfectly round and true, laid the patch upon the muzzle, and placing the bullet exactly in the centre over the bore, buried it with a single rap of a small *lignum vitae* mallet, which hung from his button-hole, and then, with but a trifling effort, drove it home by one steady thrust of the stout copper-headed charging rod. This done, he again inspected the cone, and seeing that the powder was forced quite up into sight, picked out, with the same anxious scrutiny that had marked all of his proceedings, a copper cap, which he pronounced sure to go, applied it to the nipple, crushed it down firmly with the hammer, which he then drew back to half-cock, and bolted. Then he set the piece down by the fireside, drained his hot jorum, and—

“ That fellow will do his work, and no mistake,” said he. “ Now A——, here is my single gun”—handing to him, as he spoke, one of the handsomest Westley Richards a sportsman ever handled—“ thirty-three inches, nine pounds and eleven gauge. Put in one-third above that

charger, which is its usual load, and one of those green cartridges, and I'll be bound that it will execute at eighty paces ; and that is more than Master Frank there can say for his Manton rifle, at least if he loads it with bullets patched in that slovenly and most unsportsmanlike fashion."

" I should like to know what the deuce you mean by slovenly and unsportsmanlike ? " said Frank, pulling out of his breast pocket a couple of bullets carefully sewed up in leather ; " it is the best plan possible, and saves lots of time. You see I can just shove my balls in at once, without any bother of fitting patches."

" Yes," replied Harry, " and five to one the seam, which, however neatly it is drawn, must leave a slight ridge, will cross the direction of the grooving, and give the ball a counter movement ; either destroying altogether the rotatory motion communicated by the rifling, or causing it to take a direction quite out of the true line ; accordingly as the counteraction is conveyed near the breech, or near the muzzle of the piece."

" Will so trifling a cause produce so powerful an effect ? " inquired the Commodore.

" The least variation, whether of concavity or

convexity in the bullet, will do so unquestionably, and I cannot see why the same thing in a covering superinduced to the ball should not have the same effect. Even a hole in a pellet of shot will cause it to leave the charge, and fly off at a tangent. I was once shooting in the fens of the Isle of Ely, and fired at a mallard sixty or sixty-five yards off, with double B shot, when to my great amazement a workman, digging peat at about the same distance from me with the bird, but at least ninety yards to the right of the mallard, roared out lustily that I had killed him. I saw that the drake was knocked over as dead as a stone, and consequently laughed at the fellow, and set it down as a cool trick to extort money, not uncommon among the fen men, as applied to members of the University. I had just finished loading, and my retriever had just brought in the dead bird, which was quite riddled, cut up evidently by the whole body of the charge—both the wings broken, one in three places, one leg almost dissevered, and several shots in the neck and body—when up came my friend, and sure enough he was hit; one pellet had struck him on the cheek-bone, and was imbedded in the skin. Half-a-crown, and a

lotion of whiskey, not applied to the part, but taken inwardly, soon proved a sovereign medicine ; and picking out the shot with the point of a needle, I found a hole in it big enough to admit a pin's head, and about the twentieth part of an inch in depth. This I should think is proof enough for you—but, besides this, I have seen bullets in pistol-shooting play strange vagaries, glancing off from the target at all sorts of queer angles.”

“ Well, well,” replied Frank, “ my rifle shoots true enough for me, true enough to kill generally, and who the deuce can be at the bother of your pragmatical preparations ? I am sure it might be said of you, as it was of James the First, of most pacific and pedantic memory, that you are ‘ Captain of arts, and *Clerk of arms*’—at least you are a very pedant in gunnery.”

“ No, no !” said A—— ; “ you are wrong there altogether, Master Forester ; there is nothing on earth that makes so great a difference in sportsmanship as the observation of small things. I don’t call him a sportsman who can walk stoutly and kill well, unless he can give causes for effects —unless he knows the haunts and habits both of

his game and his dogs—unless he can give a why for every wherefore."

"Then devil a bit will you ever call me one," answered Frank, "for I can't be at the trouble of thinking about it."

"Stuff—humbug—folly!" interrupted Archer; "you know a d—d deal better than that, and so do we, too! You're only cranky, a little cranky, Frank, and given to defending any folly you commit without either rhyme or reason—as when you tried to persuade me that it is the safest thing in nature to pour gunpowder out of a canister into a pound flask with a lighted cigar between your teeth; to demonstrate which you had scarcely screwed the top of the horn on, before the lighted ashes fell all over it; had they done so a moment sooner, we should all have been blown out of the room."

By this time the Commodore had donned Harry's winter jacket, and Frank, grumbling and paradoxizing all the while, had loaded his rifle, and buttoned up his pea-jacket, when in stalked Tom, swathed up to his chin in a stout dreadnought coat.

"What are ye lazin' here about?" he shouted,

"you're niver ready no how—Jem's been agone these two hours, and we'll jest be too late, and miss gittin' a shot, if so be there be a buck, which I'll be sworn there arn't!"

"Ha, ha!" the Commodore burst out, "ha, ha, ha! I should like to know which side the laziness has been on this morning, Mister Draw."

"On little wax skin's there," answered the old man, as quick as lightning; "the little snoopin' critter carn't find his gloves now; though the nags is at the door, and we all ready. We'll drink, boys, while he's looking arter 'em; and then when he's found *them*, and 's jest a gittin' on his horse, he'll find he's left his powder-horn or somethin' else, behind him; and then we'll drink agin, while he snoops back to fetch it."

"You be hanged, you old rascal!" replied Forester, a little bothered by the huge shouts of laughter which followed this most strictly accurate account of his accustomed method of proceeding; an account which, by the way, was fully justified not twenty minutes afterward, by his galloping back, neck or nothing, to get his pocket handkerchief, which he had left "*in course*," as Tom said, in his dressing-gown beside the fire.

"Come, bustle, bustle!" Harry added, as he put on his hunting cap and pulled a huge pair of fen boots on, reaching to the mid-thigh, which Timothy had garnished with a pair of bright English spurs. In another minute they were all on horseback, trotting away at a brisk pace toward the little glen, wherein, according to Jem's last report, the stag was harboured. It was in vain that during their quick ride the old man was entreated to inform them where they were to take post, or what they were to do, as he would give them no reply, nor any information whatever.

At last, however, when Forester rejoined them, after his return to the village, he turned short off from the high road to the left, and as he passed a set of bars into a wild hill pasture, struck into a hard gallop.

Before them lay the high and ridgy head of Round Top, his flanks sloping toward them, in two broad pine-clad knobs, with a wild streamlet brawling down between them, and a thick tangled swamp of small extent, but full of tall dense thornbushes, matted with vines and cat-briers, and carpeted with a rich undergrowth of fern

and winter-green, and wortleberries. To the right and left of the two knobs or spurs just mentioned, were two other deep gorges, or dry channels, bare of brushwood, and stony; rock-walled, with steep precipitous ledges toward the mountain, but sloping easily up to the lower ridges. As they reached the first of these, Tom motioned Forester to stop.

"Stand here," he whispered, "close in here, jest behind this here crag, and look out hereaways toward the village. If he comes down this runaway kill him, but mind you doosn't show a hair out of this corner; for Archer, he 'll stand next, and if so be he crosses from the swamp hole hereaways, you 'll chance to get a bullet. Be still now, as a mouse, and tie your horse here in the cove. Now, lads"—

And off he set again, rounded the knob, and making one slight motion toward the nook, wherein he wished that Harry should keep guard, wheeled back in utter silence, and very slowly, for they were close to the spot wherein, as they supposed, the object of their chase was laid up; and as yet but two of his paths were guarded toward the plain; Jem and his comrades having

long since got with the hounds into his rear, and waiting only for the rising of the sun to lay them on, and push along the channel of the brook.

This would compel him to break covert, either directly from the swamp, or by one of the dry gorges mentioned. Now, therefore, was the crisis of the whole matter; for if, before the other passes were made good, the stag should take alarm, he might steal off without affording a chance of a shot, and get into the mountains to the right, where they might hunt him for a week in vain.

No marble statue could stand more silently or still than Harry and his favourite gray, who, with erected ears and watchful eye, trembling a little with excitement, seemed to know what he was about, and to enjoy it no less keenly than his rider. Tom and the Commodore, quickening their pace as they got out of ear-shot, retraced their steps quite back to the turnpike road, along which Harry saw them gallop furiously, in a few minutes, and turn up half-a-mile off toward the further gulley; he saw no more, however, though he felt certain that the Commodore was, scarce ten minutes after he lost sight of them, standing

within twelve paces of him at the further angle of the swamp; Tom having warily determined that the two single guns should take post together, while the two doubles should be placed where the wild quarry could get off encountering but a single sportsman.

It was a period of intense excitement before the sun rose, though it was of short duration; but scarcely had his first rays touched the open meadow, casting a huge gray shadow from the rounded hill which covered half the valley, while all the farther slope was laughing in broad light, the mist wreaths curling up thinner and thinner every moment from the broad streamlet in the bottom, which here and there flashed out exultingly from its wood-covered margins—scarcely had his first rays topped the hill, before a distant shout came swelling on the air down the ravine, announcing Jem's approach. No hound gave tongue, however, nor did a rustle in the brake, or any sound of life, give token of the presence of the game; louder and nearer drew the shouts, and now Harry himself began to doubt if there were any truth in Jem's relation, when suddenly the sharp quick crack of Forester's rifle gave

token that the game was afoot,—a loud yell from that worthy followed.

“Look out! Mark, back! mark, back!”

And keenly Archer did look out, and warily did he listen; once he detected, or fancied he detected, a rustling of the underwood, and the crack of a dry stick, and dropping his reins on the horse’s neck he cocked his rifle; but the sound was not repeated, nor did anything come into sight; so he let down the hammer once again, and resumed his silent watch, saying to himself—

“Frank fired too quick, and he has headed up the brook to Jem. If he is forward enough now, we shall have him back instantly, with the hounds at his heels; but if he has loitered and hung back, ‘Over the hills and far away’ is the word for this time.”

But Jem was in his place, and in another moment a long whoop came ringing down the glen, and the shrill yelping rally of the hounds as they all opened on a view together. Fiercer and wilder grew the hubbub. And now the eager watcher might hear the brushwood torn in all directions by the impetuous passage of the wild deer and his inveterate pursuers.

"Now then, it is old Tom's chance or ours," he thought, "for he will not try Forester again, I warrant him, and we are all down wind of him, so he can't judge of our whereabouts."

In another second the bushes crashed to his left hand and behind him, while the dogs were raving scarcely a pistol-shot off in the tangled swamp. Yet he well knew that if the stag should break there it would be A——'s shot; and, though anxious, he kept his eye fixed steadily on his own point, holding his good piece cocked and ready.

"Mark, Harry, mark him!"—a loud yell from the Commodore.

The stag had broken midway between them in full sight of A——, and seeing him, had wheeled off to the right. He was now sweeping onward across the open field with high graceful bounds, tossing his antlered head aloft, as if already safe and little hurt, if anything, by Jem Lyn's boasted shot of the last evening. The gray stood motionless, trembling, however, palpably in every limb with eagerness; his ears laid flat upon his neck, and cowering a little as if he feared the shot; which it would seem his instinct told him to

expect. Harry had dropped his reins once more, and levelled his unerring rifle, yet for a moment's space he paused, waiting for A—— to fire; there was no hurry for himself, nay, a few seconds more would give him a yet fairer shot, for the buck now was running partially toward him, so that a moment more would place him broadside on, and within twenty paces.

“Bang!” came the full and round report of A——’s large shot-gun, fired before the beast was fifteen yards away from him. He had aimed at the head, as he was forced to do, lest he should spoil the haunches, for he was running now directly from him—and had the buck been fifty paces off he would have killed him dead, lodging his whole charge, or the best part of it, in the junction of the neck and skull; but as it was, the cartridge—the *green* cartridge—had not yet spread at all, nor had one buckshot left the case. Whistling like a single ball, as it passed Harry’s front eight or nine yards off, it drove, as his quick eye discovered, clean through the stag’s right ear, almost dis severing it, and making the animal bound six feet off the greensward.

Just as he touched the earth again, alighting

from his mighty spring, with an aim sure and steady, and a cool practised finger, the marksman drew his trigger, and, quick as light, the piece—well loaded, as its dry crack announced—discharged its ponderous missile. But, bad luck on it! even at that very instant, just in the point of time wherein the charge was ignited, eighteen or twenty quail, flushed by the hubbub of the hounds, rose with a loud and startling whirr, on every side of the gray horse, under his belly and about his ears, so close as almost to brush him with their wings; he bolted and reared up; yet even at that disadvantage the practised rifleman missed not his aim entirely, though he erred somewhat, and the wound in consequence was not quite deadly.

The ball, which he had meant for the heart, his sight being taken under the fore-shoulder, was raised and thrown forward by the motion of the horse, and passed clean through the neck close to the blade bone. Another leap, wilder and loftier than the last! yet still the stag dashed onward, with the blood gushing out in streams from the wide wound, though as yet neither speed nor strength appeared to be impaired, so fleetly did he scour the meadow.

“ He will cross Frank yet !” cried Archer.
“ Mark ! mark him, Forester ! ”

But, as he spoke, he set his rifle down against the fence, and hallooed to the hounds, which instantly, obedient to his well-known and cheery whoop, broke covert in a body and settled heads up and sterns down to the blazing scent.

At the same moment A—— came trotting out from his post, gun in hand ; while at a thundering gallop, blaspheming awfully as he came on, and rating them for “ know-nothins, and blunderin’ etarnal spoil-sports,” Tom rounded the farther hill, and spurred across the level. By this time they were all in sight of Forester, who stood on foot, close to his horse, in the mouth of the last gorge, the buck running across him sixty yards off, and quartering a little from him toward the road ; the hounds were, however, all midway between him and the quarry, and as the ground sloped steeply from the marksman, he was afraid of firing low, but took a long, and, as it seemed, sure aim at the head.

The rifle flashed—a tine flew, splintered by the bullet, from the brow antler, not an inch above the eye.

"Give him the other!" shouted Archer. "Give him the other barrel!"

But Frank shook his head spitefully, and dropped the muzzle of his piece.

"By the devil, then, he's forgot his bullets, and hadn't nothen to load up agen, when he missed the first time!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared once again the Commodore; "ha, ha, hah!—ha, ha!" till rock and mountain rang again.

"By the Eternal!" exclaimed Draw, perfectly frantic with passion and excitement; "By thunder! A——, I guess you'd laugh if your best friends was all a dyin' at your feet. You would for sartain. But look, look! what the plague's Harry goin' at?"

For when he saw that Forester had now, for some reason or other, no farther means of stopping the stag's career, Archer had set spurs to his horse, and dashed away at a hard furious gallop after the wounded buck. The hounds, which had lost sight of it as it leaped a high stone wall with much brush round the base of it, were running fast and furious on the scent; but still, though flagging somewhat in his speed, the stag was leaving them.

He had turned, as the last shot struck his horns, down hill, as if to cross the valley; but immediately, as if perceiving that he had passed the last of his enemies, turned up again toward the mountain, describing an arc, almost, in fact, a semicircle, from the point where he had broken covert to that—another gully, at perhaps a short mile's distance—for which he was now aiming.

Across the chord, then, of this arc, Harry was driving furiously, with the intent, as it would seem, to cut him off from the gulley; the stone wall crossed his line, but not a second did he pause for it, but gave his horse both spurs, and lifting him a little, landed him safely at the other side. Frank mounted rapidly, dashed after him, and soon passed A——, who was less aptly mounted for a chase; he likewise topped the wall, and disappeared beyond it, though the stones flew, where the bay struck the coping with his heels.

All pluck to the back-bone, the Commodore craned not nor hesitated, but dashed the colt, for the first time in his life, at the high barrier—he tried to stop, but could not, so powerfully did his rider cram him—leaped short, and tumbled head over heels, carrying half the wall away with

him, and leaving a gap as if a wagon had passed through it—to Tom's astonishment and agony, for he supposed the colt destroyed for ever.

Scarcely, however, had A—— gained his feet, before a sight met his eyes which made him leave the colt, and run as fast as his legs could carry him toward the scene of action.

The stag, seeing his human enemy so near, had strained every nerve to escape, and Harry, desperately rash and daring, seeing he could not turn or head him, actually spurred upon him counter to broadside, in hope to ride him down; foiled once again, in this—his last hope, as it seemed—he drew his longest knife, and as—a quarter of a second too late only—he crossed behind the buck, he swung himself half out of his saddle, and striking a full blow, succeeded in hamstringing him; while the gray, missing the support of the master-hand; stumbled and fell upon his head.

Horse, stag, and man, all rolled upon the ground within the compass of ten yards, the terrified and wounded deer striking out furiously in all directions, so that it seemed impossible that Archer could escape some deadly injury—while, to increase the fury and the peril of the scene, the

hounds came up, and added their fresh fierceness to the fierce confusion. Before, however, A—— came up, Harry had gained his feet, drawn his small knife—the larger having luckily flown many yards as he fell—and running in behind the struggling quarry, had seized the brow antler, and at one strong and skilful blow, severed the weasand and the jugular. One gush of dark red gore—one plunging effort, and the superb and stately beast lay motionless for ever; while the loud death halloo rang over the broad valley—all fears, all perils, utterly forgotten in the strong rapture of that thrilling moment.

SNIPE ON THE UPLAND.

" Now then, boys, we 've no time to lose," said Archer, as he replaced his knives, which he had been employed in wiping with great care, in their respective scabbards; " it 's getting toward eight o'clock, and I feel tolerably peckish, the milk-punch and biscuits notwithstanding ; we shall not be in the field before ten o'clock, do our best for it. Now, Jem," he continued, as that worthy, followed by David Seers and the Captain, made their appearance, hot and breathless, but in high spirits at the glorious termination of the morning's sport—" Now, Jem, you and the Captain must look out a good strong pole, and tie that fellow's legs, and carry him between you as far as Blain's house—you can come up with the wagon this afternoon, and bring him down to the village. What the deuce are you pottering at that colt about, Tom? He 's not hurt a pin's value, on the contrary—"

" Better for 't, I suppose, you 'll be a tellin' me torights; better for that all-fired etarnal tumble, aint he? " responded the fat chap, with a lamentable attempt at an ironical smile, put on to hide his real chagrin.

" *In* course he is," replied Frank, who had recovered his wonted equanimity, and who, having been most unmercifully rallied by the whole party for leaving his bullets at home, was glad of an opportunity to carry the war into the enemy's country—" *in* course he is a great deal better, if a thing can be said to be better, which, under all circumstances, is so infernally *bad* as that brute. I should think he *was* better for it. Why, by the time he 's had half-a-dozen more such purls, he 'll leap a six foot fence without shaking a loose rail. In fact, I 'll bet a dollar I carry him back over that same wall without touching a stone." And, as he spoke, he set his foot into the stirrup, as if he were about to put his threat into immediate execution.

" Quit, Forester—quit, I say—quit, now, consarn the hide on you!" shouted the fat man, now in great tribulation, and apprehending a second edition of the tumble; " quit foolin', or by the devil

I'll put a grist of shot, or one of they green cartridges into you stret away ; I will, by the Etarnal !” and as he spoke he dropped the muzzle of his gun, and put his thumb upon the cock.

“ *I say quit foolin’, too,*” cried Harry ; “ both of you quit it ; you d—d old fool, Tom, do you really suppose he is mad enough to ride that brute of yours again at the wall ?”

“ Mad enough? yes, I swon he be,” responded Tom ; “ both of you be as mad as the Hull Asylum down to York. If Frank arn’t mad, then there aint such a word as mad !” But as he spoke he replaced his gun under his arm, and walked off to his horse, which he mounted without farther words, his example being followed by the whole party, who set off on the spur, and reached the village in less than half-an-hour.

Breakfast was on the table when they got there—black tea, produced from Harry’s magazine of stores, rich cream, hot bread, and Goshen butter—eggs in abundance, boiled, roasted, fried with ham—an omelet *aux fines herbes*, no inconsiderable token of Tim’s culinary skill—a cold round of spiced beef, and last, not least, a dish of wood-duck hot from the gridiron.

"By George," said Harry, "here's a feast for an epicure! and I can find the appetite."

"*Find it*"—said Forester, grinning, who, pretending to eat nothing or next to nothing, and not to care what was set before him, was really the greatest *gourmet* and heaviest feeder of the party—"Find it, Harry? it's quite new to me that you ever *lost* it. When was it, hey?"

"Arter he'd eat a hull roast pig, I reckon—leastwise that *might* make Harry lose his'n; but I'll be darned if *tha* would be a sarcumstance to set before *you*, Frank, no how. Here's A——, too, he don't never eat."

"These wood-duck are delicious," answered the Commodore, who was very busily employed in stowing away his provant. "What a capital bird it is, Harry!"

"Indeed is it," said he, "and this is, *me judice*, the very best way to eat it, red-hot from the gridiron, cooked very quick, and *brown* on the outside, and full of gravy when you cut; with a squeeze of a lemon and a dash of cayenne it is sublime. What say you, Forester?"

"Oh, you wont ketch him sayin' nauthen, leastwise not this half hour—but the way he'll keep a

feedin' wont be slow, I tell you—that's the way to judge how Forester likes his grub—*jest see* how he takes hold on 't."

"Are there many wood-duck about this season, Tom?" asked Forester, affecting to be perfectly careless and indifferent to all that had passed.
"Did you kill these yourself?"

"There was a sight on them a piece back, but they're gettin' scarce—pretty scarce now, I tell you. Yes, I shot these down by Aunt Sally's big spring-hole a Friday. I'd been a lookin' round, you see, to find where the quail kept afore you came up here—for I'd been expectin' you a week and better—and I'd got in quite late, toward sundown, with an outsidin' bevy, down by the cedar swamp, and druv them off into the big bog meadows, below Sugarloaf, and I'd killed quite a bunch on them—sixteen, I reckon, Archer; and there wasn't but eighteen when I lit on 'em—and it was gittin' pretty well dark when I came to the big spring, and little Dash was worn dead out, and I was tired, and hot, and thunderin' thirsty, so I sets down aside the outlet where the spring water comes in good and cool, and I was mixin' up a nice long drink in the big glass we hid last

summer down in the mud-hole, with some *great* cider sperrits—when what should I hear all at once but whistle, whistlin' over head, the wings of a hull drove on 'em, so up I buckled the old gun; but they'd plumped down into the crick fifteen rod off or better, down by the big pin oak, and there they sot, seven ducks and two big purple-headed drakes—beauties, I tell you. Well, boys, I upped gun and tuck sight stret away, but just as I was drawin', I kind o' thought I'd got two little charges of number eight, and that to shoot at ducks at fifteen rod wasn't nauthen. Well, then, I fell a thinkin', and then I sairched my pockets, and arter a piece found two green cartridges of number three, as Archer gave me in the spring, so I drawed out the small shot, and inned with these, and put fresh caps on to be sarten. But jest when I'd got ready, the ducks had floated down with the stream, and dropped behind the pint—so I downed on my kness, and crawled, and Dash along side on me, for all the world as if the darned dog knowed: well, I crawled quite a piece, till I'd got under a bit of alder bush, and then I seen them—all in a lump like, except two—six ducks and a big drake—

feedin', and stickin' down their heads into the weeds, and flutterin' up their hinder eends, and chatterin' and jokin'—I could have covered them all with a handkercher, exceptin' two, as I said afore, one duck and the little drake, and they was off a rod or better from the rest, at the two different sides of the stream—the big bunch warn't over ten rods off me, nor so far; so I tuck sight right at the big drake's neck. The water was quite clear and still, and seemed to have caught all the little light as was left by the sun, for the skies had got pretty dark, I tell you; and I could see his head quite clear agin the water—well, I draw'd trigger, and the hull charge ripped into 'em—and there was a scrabblin' and a squatterin' in the water now, I tell you—but not one on 'em riz—not the darned one of the hull bunch; but up jumped both the others, and I drawed on the drake—more by the whistlin' of his wings, than that I seen him—but I drawed stret, Archer, any ways; and arter I'd pulled half a moment I hard him plump down into the creek with a splash, and the water sparkled up like a fountain where he fell. So then I didn't wait to load, but ran along the bank as hard as I could strick it, and when

I'd got down to the spot, I tell you, little Dash had got two on 'em out afore I came, and was in with a third. Well, sich a cuttin' and a splashin' as there was you niver did see, none on you, I guess, for sartin—leastwise I niver did. I'd killed, you see, the drake and two ducks, dead at the first fire, but three was only wounded, wing-tipped, and leg-broken, and I can't tell you what all. It was all of nine o'clock at night, and dark as the devil, afore I gathered them three ducks—but I did gather 'em—Lord, boys, why I'd stayed till mornin' but I'd a got them, sarten. Well, the drake I killed flyin' I couldn't find him that night, no how, for the stream swept him down, and I hadn't got no guide to go by, so I let *him* go then; but I was up next mornin' bright and airy, and started up the stream clean from the bridge here, up through Garry's backside, and my boghole, and so on along the meadows to Aunt Sally's run; and I looked in every willow bush that dammed the waters back, like, and every bunch of weeds, and brier-brake, all the way, and sure enough I found him; he'd been killed dead, and floated down the crick, and then the stream had washed him up into a heap of broken sticks and briars, and when the

waters fell, for there had ben a little freshet, they left him there breast uppermost; and I *was* glad to find him—for I think, Archer, as that shot was the nicest, prettiest, etarnal, d—dest, long, *good* shot, I iver did make, any how; and it was so dark I couldn't see him."

"A *sweet* shot, Tom," responded Forester—"a sweet pretty shot, if there had only been one word of truth in it, which there is not—don't answer me, you old thief!—shut up instantly, and get your traps; for *we've* done feeding, and *you're* done lying, for the present, at least I hope so—and now we'll out, and see whether you 've poached up all the game in the country."

"Well, it be gettin' late for sartin," answered Tom, "and that 'll save your little wax skin for the time; but see, jest see, boy, if I doosn't sarve you out, now, afore sundown!"

"Which way shall we beat, Tom?" asked Harry, as he changed his riding boots for heavy shooting shoes and leggins—"which course to-day?"

"Why, Timothy 's gittin' out the wagon, and we 'll drive up the old road round the ridge, and so strike in by Minthorne's, and take them ridges down, and so cross the hill—there 's some big

stubbles there, and nice thick brush holes along the fence sides, and the boys doos tell us there be one or two big bevies—but, d—n them, they *will* lie!—and over back of Gin’ral Bertolf’s barns, and so acrost the road, and round the upper eend of the big pond, and down the long swamp into Hell-hole, and Tim can meet us with the wagon at five o’clock under Bill Wisner’s white oak—does that suit you?”

“ Excellently well, Tom,” replied Harry; “ I could not have cut a better day’s work out myself, if I had tried. Well, all the traps are in, and the dogs,—Timothy, is it not so?”

“ Ey, ey, Sur!” shouted that worthy from without; “ all in, this half-hour, and all roight!”

“ Light your cigars then, quick, and let us start —hurrah!”

Within two minutes they were all seated, Fat Tom in the post of honour by Harry’s side upon the driving box, the Commodore and Frank, with Timothy, on the back seat—and off they rattled, ten miles an hour without the whip, up hill and down dale all alike, for they had but three miles to go, and that was gone in double quick time.

“ What mun Ay do wi’ t’ horses, Sur?” asked Tim, touching his castor as he spoke.

"Take them home, to be sure," replied Harry, "and meet us with them under the oak tree, close to Mr. Wisner's house, at five o'clock this evening."

"Nay, nay, Sur!" answered Tim, with a broad grin, eager to see the sport, and hating to be sent so unceremoniously home, "that winna do, I 'm thinking — who 'll hug t'gam bag, and carry t' bottles, and make t'loonchun ready; that winna do, Sur, niver. If *you* ple-ease, Sur, Ay 'll pit oop t' horses i' Measter Minthorne's barn here, and shak' doon a bit o' hay tull 'em, and so gang on wi' you, and carry t' bag whaile four o' t' clock, and then awa back and hitch oop, and draive doon to t' aik tree."

"I understand, Tim," said his master, laughing; "I understand right well; you want to see the sport."

"Ayse ophaud it!" grinned Timothy, seeing at once that he should gain his point.

"Well, well; I don't care about it; will Minthorne let us put up the beasts in his barn, Tom?"

"*Let us! let us!*" exclaimed the fat man; "by G—d I'd like to see Joe Minthorne, or any other of his breed, a tellin' me I shouldn't put my

cattle where I pleased ; jest let me ketch him at it !”

“ Very well ; have it your own way, Tim ; take care of the beasts, and overtake us as quick as you can.” And, as he spoke, he let down the bars which parted a fine wheat stubble from the road, and entered the field with the dogs at heel. “ We must part company to beat these little woods, must we not, Tom ?”

“ I guess so. I ’ll go on with A—— ; his Grouse and my Dash will work well enough, and you and Frank keep down the valley hereaways ; we ’ll beat that little swamp-hole, and then the open woods to the brook-side, and so along the meadows to the big bottom ; you keep the hill-side coverts, and look the little pond-holes well on Minthorne’s Ridge, you ’ll find a cock or two there any how ; and beat the bushes by the wall ; I guess you ’ll have a bevy jumpin’ up ; and try, boys, do, to git ’em down the hill into the boggy bottom, for we *can* use them, I tell you !” and so they parted.

Archer and Forester, with Shot and Chase at heel, entered the little thicket indicated, and beat it carefully, but *blank* ; although the dogs worked

hard, and seemed as if about to make game more than once. They crossed the road, and came into another little wood, thicker and wetter than the first, with several springy pools, although it was almost upon the summit of the hill. Here Harry took the left or lower hand, bidding Frank keep near the outside at top, and full ten yards ahead of him.

“ And mind, if you hear Tom shoot, or cry ‘ *mark*,’ jump over into the open field, and be all eyes, for that’s their line of country into the swamp, where we would have them. Hold up, good dogs, hold up !”

And off they went, crashing and rattling through the dry matted briars, crossing each other evenly, and quartering the ground with rare accuracy. Scarcely, however, had they beat ten paces, before Shot flushed a cock as he was in the very act of turning at the end of his beat, having run in on him down wind, without crossing the line of scent. Flip—flip—flap rose the bird, but as the dog had turned, and was now running from him, he perceived no cause for alarm, fluttered a yard or two onward, and alighted. The dog, who had neither scented nor seen the bird, caught the sound of his

wing, and stood stiff on the instant, though his stern was waved doubtfully, and though he turned his sagacious knowing phiz over his shoulder, as if to look out for the pinion, the flap of which had arrested his quick ear. The bird had settled ere he turned, but Shot's eye fell upon his master, as with his finger on the trigger-guard, and thumb on the hammer, he was stepping softly up in a direct line, with eye intently fixed, toward the place where the woodcock had dropped; he knew as well as though he had been blessed with human intellect, that game was in the wind, and remained still and steady. Flip—flap again up jumped the bird.

“Mark cock,” cried Forester, from the other side of the wood, not having seen any thing, but hearing the sound of the timber-doodle’s wing somewhere or other; and at the selfsame moment —bang! boomed the full report of Harry’s right-hand barrel: the feathers drifting off down wind toward Frank told him the work was done, and he asked no question; but ere the cock had struck the ground, which he did within half a second, completely doubled up—whirr, whirr-r-r! the loud and startling hubbub of ruffed grouse

taking wing at the report of Harry's gun, succeeded ; and instantly, before that worthy had got his eye about from marking the killed woodcock, — bang ! bang ! from Forester. Archer dropped butt, and loaded as fast as it was possible, and bagged his dead bird quietly, but scarcely had he done so before Frank hailed him :—

“Bring up the dogs, old fellow ; I knocked down two, and I've bagged one, but I'm afraid the other 's run !”

“Stand still, then ; stand still, till I join you. He-here ! he-here ! good dogs,” cried Harry, striding away through the brush like a good one.

In a moment he stood by Frank, who was just pocketing his first, a fine hen grouse.

“The other was the cock,” said Frank, “and a very large one, too ; he was a long shot, but he 's very hard hit. He flew against this tree before he fell, and bounded off it here ; look at the feathers.”

“Ay ; we 'll have him in a moment. Seek dead, Shot ; seek, good dogs. Ha ! now they wind him. *There !* Chase has him. No ! he draws

again. Now Shot is standing ; hold up ! hold up ! lads ; he 's running like the mischief, and won't stop till he reaches some thick covert."

Bang ! bang ! "Mark—ma-ark !" bang ! bang ! "Mark, Harry Archer, mark !" came down the wind, in quick succession, from the other party, who were beating some thick briars by the brook-side, at three or four fields' distance.

"Quick, Forester, quick !" shouted Archer. "Over the wall, lad, and mark them ; those are quail : I 'm man enough to get this fellow by myself. Steady, lads ! steady-y-y !" as they were roading on at the top of their pace. "Toho ! toho-o-o, Chase ; fie, for shame ! Don't you see, sir, Shot 's got him dead there, under his very nose, in those cat-briars. Ha, dead ! good lads, good lads ! Dead ! dead ! fetch him, good dog ! By George, but he 's a fine bird ! I 've got him, Forester ; have you marked down the quail ?"

"Ay, ay ; in the bog-bottom."

"How many ?"

"Twenty-three."

"Then we 'll have sport, by Jove !" and, as he spoke, they entered a wide, rushy pasture, across which, at some two or three hundred yards, A——

and fat Tom were seen advancing toward them. They had not made three steps before both dogs stood stiff as stones in the short grass, where there was not a particle of covert.

"Why, what the deuce is this, Harry?"

"Devil a know know I," responded he; "but step up to the red dog, Frank, I'll go to the other."

They 've got game, and no mistake."

"Skeap—ske-eap!" up sprang a couple of English snipe before Shot's nose, and Harry cut them down, a splendid double shot, before they had flown twenty yards, just as Frank dropped the one which rose to him at the same moment. At the sound of the guns a dozen more rose hard by, and fluttering on in rapid zigzags, dropped once again within a hundred yards. The meadow was alive with them.

"Did you ever see snipe *here* before, Tom?" asked Harry, as he loaded.

"Never in all my life; but it's full now. Load up, load up, for G—d's sake!"

"No hurry, Tom. Tom—steady! The birds are tame, and lie like stones. We can get thirty or forty *here*, I know, if you 'll be steady only;

but if we go in with these four dogs, we shall lose all. Here comes Tim with the couples, and we'll take up all but two."

"That's right," said A——; "take up Grouse and Tom's dog, for they won't hunt with yours, and yours are the steadiest, and fetch. That's it, Tim, couple them, and carry them away. What have you killed, Archer?" he added, while his injunctions were complied with.

"One woodcock and a brace of ruffed grouse; and Frank has marked down three-and-twenty quail into that rushy bottom yonder, where we can get every bird of them. We are going to have great sport to-day."

"I think so. Tom and I each killed a double shot out of that bevy."

"That was well. Now, then, walk slowly and far apart; we must beat this three or four times, at least. The dogs will get them up."

It was not a moment before the first bird rose; but it was quite two hours, and all the dinner horns had long blown for noon, before the last was bagged: the four guns having scored, in that one meadow, forty-nine English snipe—fifteen for Harry Archer, thirteen for Tom Draw, twelve for

the Commodore, and only nine for Forester, who never killed snipe quite so well as he did cock or quail.

"And now, boys," exclaimed Tom, as he flung his huge carcase on the ground, with a thud that shook it many a rood around, "there 's a cold roast fowl and some nice salt pork and crackers in that 'ar game-bag, and I 'm devil now, I tell you, for a drink."

"Which will you take to drink, Tom?" inquired Forester, very gravely—"fowl, pork, or crackers? Here they are, all of them; I prefer whiskey and water myself;" qualifying, as he spoke, a moderate cup with some of the ice-cold water, which welled out in a crystal stream from a small basin under the wreathed roots of the sycamore which overshadowed them.

"None of your nonsense, Forester—hand us the liquor, lad—I 'm dry, I tell you!"

"I wish you'd tell me something I don't know, then, if you feel communicative; for I know that you're dry—*now* and always! Well, don't be mad, old fellow, here's the bottle—don't empty it, that's all!"

"Well, now I've drinked," said Tom, after

a vast potation ; “ now I’ve drinked good—we ’ll have a bite and rest awhile, and smoke a pipe ; and then we ’ll use them quail, and we ’ll have time to pick up twenty cock in Hell-hole arterwards, and that won’t be a slow day’s work, I reckon.”

THE QUAIL.

"CERTAINLY this is a very lovely country," exclaimed the Commodore suddenly, as he gazed with a quiet eye, puffing his cigar the while, over the beautiful vale, with the clear expanse of Wickham's Pond in the middle foreground, and the wild hoary mountains framing the rich landscape in the distance.

"Truly, you may say that," replied Harry; "I have travelled over a large part of the world, and for its own peculiar style of loveliness, I must say that I never have seen any thing to match with the vale of Warwick. I would give much, very much, to own a few acres and a snug cottage here, in which I might pass the rest of my days, far aloof from the—

'Fumum et opes strepitumque Romæ.'

"Then why the devil don't you own a few acres?" put in ancient Tom; "I'd be right glad

to know, and gladder yit to have you up here,
Archer."

"I would indeed, Tom," answered Harry; "I'm not joking at all; but there are never any small places to be bought hereabout; and, as for large ones, your land is so confounded good, that a fellow must be a nabob to think of buying."

"Well, how would Jem Burt's place suit you, Archer?" asked the fat man. "You knows it—jist a mile and a half 'tother side Warwick, by the crick side. I guess it will have to be sold any how next April; leastways the old man's dead, and the heirs want the estate settled up like."

"Suit me!" cried Harry, "by George! it's just the thing, if I recollect it rightly. But how much land is there?"

"Twenty acres, I guess, not over twenty-five, no how."

"And the house?"

"Well, that wants fixin' some; and the bridge over the crick 's putty bad, too; it will want putty nigh a new one. Why, the house is a story and a half like; and it's jist an entry stret through

the middle, and a parlour on one side on 't, and a kitchen on t' other ; and a chamber behind both on 'em."

" What can it be bought for, Tom ? "

" I guess three thousand dollars ; twenty-five hundred, maybe. It will go cheap, I reckon ; I don't hear tell o' no one lookin' at it."

" What will it cost me more to *fix* it, think you ? "

" Well, you see, Archer, the land 's ben most darned badly done by, this last three years, since old 'squire 's ben so low ; and the bridge, that 'll take a smart sum ; and the fences is putty much gone to rack ; I guess it 'll take hard on to a thousand more to fix it up right, like you 'd like to have it, without doin' nothin' at the house."

" And fifteen hundred more for that and the stables. I wish to heaven I had known this yesterday ; or rather before I came up hither," said Harry.

" Why so ? " asked the Commodore.

" Why, as the deuce would have it, I told my broker to invest six thousand, that I have got loose, in a good mortgage, if he could find one, for five years ; and I have got no stocks that I

can sell out; all that I have but this, is on good bond and mortgage, in Boston, and little enough of it, too."

"Well, if that's all," said Forester, "we can run down to-morrow, and you will be in time to stop him."

"That's true, too," answered Harry, pondering.
"Are you sure it can be bought, Tom?"

"I guess so," was the response.

"That means, I suppose, that you're perfectly certain of it. Why the devil can't you speak English?"

"English!" exclaimed Frank; "Good Lord, why don't you ask him why he can't speak Greek? English! Lord, Lord, Lord! Tom Draw and English!"

"I'll jist tell Archer what he warnts to know, and then see you, my dear little critter, if I doos n't English you some!" replied the old man, waxing wroth. "Well, Archer, to tell heaven's truth, now, I doos *know* it; but it's an *eternal* all-fired shame of me to be tellin' it, bein' as how I knows it in the way of business like. It's got to be selled by *vandoo** in April."

* *Vendue*. Why the French word for a public auction has been adopted throughout the Northern and Eastern States, as applied to a sheriff's sale, deponent saith not.

"Then, by Jove! I will buy it," said Harry; "and down I'll go to-morrow. But that need not take you away, boys: you can stay and finish out the week here, and go home in the Ianthe! Tom will send you down to Nyack."

"Sartain," responded Tom; "but now I'm most darned glad I told you that, Archer. I meant to a told you on 't afore, but it clean slipped out of my head; but all's right, now. Hark, hark! don't you hear, boys? The quails hasn't all got together yit—better luck. Hush, A——, and you'll hear them callin'—whew-wheat; whew-wheat; whe-whe-whe!" and the old Turk began to call most scientifically; and in ten minutes the birds were answering him from all quarters, through the circular space of bog meadow, and through the thorny brake beyond it, and some from a large ragwort field further yet.

"How is this, Frank? did they scatter so much when they dropped?" asked Harry.

"Yes, part of them 'lighted in the little bank on this hedge, by the spring, you know; and some, a dozen or so, right in the middle of the bog, by the single hickory; and five or six went into the swamp, and a few over it."

"That's it! that's it! and they've been

running to try to get together," said the Commodore.

"But was too skeart to call, till we'd quit shootin'," said Tom. "But come, boys, let's be stirrin', else they'll git together like; they keeps drawin', drawin', into one place now, I can hear."

No sooner said than done; we were all on foot in an instant, and ten minutes brought us to the edge of the first thicket; and here was the truth of Harry's precepts tested by practice in a moment; for they had not yet entered the thin bushes, on which now the red leaves hung few and sere, before old Shot threw his nose high into the air, straightened his neck and his stern, and struck out at a high trot, the other setter evidently knowing what he meant, though as yet he had not caught the wind of them. In a moment they both stood steady; and, almost at the same instant, Tom Draw's Dash and A——'s Grouse came to the point, all on different birds, in a bit of very open ground, covered with winter-green about knee deep, and interspersed with only a few scattered bushes.

Whir-r-r-r—up they got all at once! what a jostle—what a hubbub! Bang! bang! crack!

bang! crack! bang! Four barrels exploded in an instant, almost simultaneously; and two sharp unmeaning cracks announced that, by some means or other, Frank Forester's gun had missed fire with both barrels.

"What the deuce is the matter, boys?" cried Harry, laughing, as he threw up his gun, after the hubbub had subsided, and dropped two birds—the only two that fell, for all that waste of shot and powder.

"What the deuce ails you?" he repeated, no one replying, and all hands looking bashful and crest-fallen. "Are you all drunk? or what is the matter? I ask merely for information."

"Upon my life, I believe *I am!*" said Frank Forester. "For I have not loaded my gun at all, since I killed those two last snipe; and when we got up from luncheon, I put on the caps just as if all was right. But all is right now," he added, for he had repaired his fault, and loaded before A—— or fat Tom had done staring, each in the other's face, in blank astonishment.

"Step up to Grouse, then," said Archer, who had never taken his eye off the old brown pointer, while he was loading as fast as he could. "He

has got a bird, close under his nose ; and it will get up, and steal away directly. That 's a trick they will play very often."

" He haint got no bird," said Tom, sulkily. And Frank paused doubtful.

" Step up, I tell you, Frank," said Harry ; " the old Turk's savage, that 's all."

And Frank did step up, close to the dog's nose ; and sent his foot through the grass close under it. Still the dog stood perfectly stiff ; but no bird rose.

" I telled you there war'nt no quails there ; " growled Tom.

" And I tell you there are ! " answered Archer, more sharply than he often spoke to his old ally ; for, in truth, he was annoyed at his obstinate pertinacity.

" What do you say, Commodore ? Is Grouse lying ? Kick that tussock—kick it hard, Frank."

" Not he," replied A—— ; " I 'll bet fifty to one, there 's a bird there."

" It 's devilish odd, then, that he won 't get up !" said Frank.

Whack ! whack ! and he gave the hard tussock two kicks with his heavy boot, that fairly

made it shake. Nothing stirred. Grouse still kept his point, but seemed half inclined to dash in. Whack! a third kick that absolutely loosened the tough tussock from the ground, and then, whirr-r, from within six inches of the spot where all three blows had been delivered, up got the bird, in a desperate hurry, and in quite as desperate a hurry Forester covered it—covered it before it was six yards off. His finger was on the trigger, when Harry quietly said, “Steady, Frank!” and the word acted like magic.

He took the gun quite down from his shoulder, nodded to his friend, brought it up again, and turned the bird over very handsomely, at twenty yards, or a little further.

“Beautifully done, indeed, Frank!” said Harry.
“So much for coolness!”

“What do you say to that, Tom?” said the Commodore, laughing.

But there was no laugh in Tom; he only uttered a savage growl, and an awful imprecation; and Harry’s quick glance warned A—— not to plague the old Trojan further.

All this passed in a moment; and then was seen one of those singular things that will at

times happen ; but with regard to quail only, so far as I have ever seen or heard tell. For as Forester was putting down the card upon the powder in the barrel which he had just fired, a second bird rose, almost from the identical spot whence the first had been so difficultly flushed, and went off in the same direction. But not in the least was Frank flurried now. He dropped his ramrod quietly upon the grass, brought up his piece deliberately to his eye, and killed his bird again.

“ Excellent, excellent ! Frank,” said Harry again. “ I never saw two prettier shots in all my life. Nor did I ever see birds lie harder.”

During all this time, amidst all the kicking of tussocks, threshing of bog-grass, and banging of guns, and, worst of all, bouncing up of fresh birds, from the instant when they dropped at the first shot, neither one of Harry’s dogs, nor Tom’s little Dash, had budged from their down charge. Now, however, they got up quickly ; and soon retrieved all the dead birds.

“ Now then we will divide into two parties,” said Harry. “ Frank, you go with Tom ; and you come with me, Commodore. It will never do to have you two jealous fellows together,—you

won't kill a bird all day," he added, in a lower voice. "That is the worst of old Tom, when he gets jealous, he's the very devil. Frank is the only fellow that can get along with him at all. He puts *me* out of temper, and if we both got angry, it would be very disagreeable. For, though he is the best fellow in the world, when he is in a rage he is untameable. I cannot think what has put him out now; for he has shot very well to-day. It is only when he gets behind hand, that he is usually jealous in his shooting; but he has got the deuce into him now."

By this time, the two parties were perhaps forty yards apart when Dash came to a point again. Up got a single bird, the old cock, and flew directly away from Tom, across Frank's face; but not for that did the old chap pause. Up went his cannon to his shoulder; there was a flash and a roar, and the quail, which was literally not twelve feet from him, disappeared as if it had been resolved into thin air. The whole of Tom's concentrated charge had struck the bird endwise, as it flew from him; and, except the extreme tips of his wings, and one foot, no part of him could be found.

"The devil!" cried Harry, "that is too bad!"

"Never mind," said the Commodore, "Frank will manage him."

As he spoke, a second bird got up, and crossed Forester in the same manner; Draw doing precisely as he had done before; but, this time, missing the quail clear, which Forester turned over.

"Load quick, and step up to that fellow. He will run, I think!" said Archer.

"Ay, ay!" responded Frank, and having rammed down his charge like lightning, moved forward, before he had put the cap on the barrel he had fired.

Just as he took the cap out of his pocket between his finger and thumb, a second quail rose. As cool and self-possessed as it is possible to conceive, Frank cocked the left-hand barrel with his little finger, still holding the cap between his forefinger and thumb, and actually contrived to bring up the gun, somehow or other,* and to kill the bird, pulling the trigger with his middle finger.

* If I had not seen the whole of this scene with my eyes, and had I not witnesses of the fact, I would scarce dare to relate it. From the cutting the first bird to atoms, all is strictly true.

At the report a third quail sprang, close under his feet ; and, still unshaken, he capped the right-hand barrel, fired, and the bird towered.

“Mark, mark, Tom !—Ma-ark Timothy !” shouted Harry and A—— in a breath.

“That bird is as dead as Hannibal now !” added Archer, as having spun up three hundred feet into the air, and flown twice as many hundred yards, it turned over, and fell plumb like a stone, through the clear atmosphere.

“Ayse gotten that chap marked doon roight, Ayse warrant un !” shouted Timothy, from the hill-side, where, with some trouble, he was holding in the obstreperous spaniels. “He’s doon in a roight laine awixt t’ muckle gray stean, and yon hoigh ashen tree.”

“Did you ever see such admirable shooting, though ?” asked A——, in a low voice. “I did not know Forester shot like that.”

“Sometimes he does—when he’s cool. He is not certain ; that is his only fault. One day he is the coolest man I ever saw in a field ; and the next the most impetuous ; but when he *is* cool, he shoots splendidly. As you say, A——, I never saw any thing better done in my life. It was

the perfection of coolness and quickness combined."

"I cannot conceive how it *was* done at all. How he brought up and fired that first barrel with a **cap** between his thumb and forefinger! Why, I could not fire a gun so, in cold blood!"

"Nor could he, probably. Deliberate promptitude is the thing! Well, Tom, what do you think of that? Wasn't that pretty shooting?"

"It was so, pretty shootin'," responded the fat man, quite delighted out of his crusty mood. "I guess the darned little critter's got three barrels to his gun somehow; leastwise it seems to me, I swon, 'at he fired her off three times without loadin'! I guess I'll quit tryin' to shoot agin Frank, to-day."

"I told you so!" said Harry to the Commodore, with a low laugh; and then added aloud—"I think you may as well, Tom; for I don't believe the fellow will miss another bird to-day."

And in truth, strange to say, it fell out in reality, nearly as Archer had spoken in jest. The whole party shot exceedingly well. The four birds, which Tom and the Commodore had missed at the first start, were found again in an old rag-

wort field, and brought to bay; and of the twenty-three quail which Forester had marked down into the bog meadow, not one bird escaped, and of that bevy not one bird did Frank miss, killing twelve, all of them double shots, to his own share, and beating Archer in a canter.

But that sterling sportsman cared not a stiver; too many times by far had he had the field, too sure was he of doing the same many a time again, to dislike being beaten once. Besides this, he was always the least jealous shot in the world, for a very quick one; and, in this instance, he was perhaps better pleased to see his friend "go in and win," than he would have been to do the like himself.

Exactly at two o'clock, by A——'s repeater, the last bird was bagged; making twenty-seven quail, forty-nine snipe, two ruffed grouse, and one woodcock, bagged in about five hours.

"So far, this is the very best day's sport I ever saw," said Archer; "and two things I have seen which I never saw before; a whole bevy of quail killed without the escape of one bird, and a whole bevy killed entirely by double shots, except the odd bird. You, A——, have killed three double

shots—I have killed three—Tom Draw one double shot, and the odd bird; and Master Frank there, confound him, six double shots running—the cleverest thing I ever heard of, and, in Forester's case, the best shooting possible. I have missed one bird, you two, and Tom three."

" But Tom beant a goin' to miss no more birds, I can tell you, boy. Tom's drinked agin, and feels kind o' righter than he did—kind o' *first best*! You'd best all drink, boys—the spring's handy, close by here; and after we gits down acrost the road into the big swamp, and Hell-hole, there arn't a drop o' water fit to drink, till we gits way down to Aunt Sally's big spring-hole, jest to home."

" I second the motion," said Harry; " and then let us be quick, for the day is wearing away, and we have got a long beat yet before us. I wish it were a sure one. But it is not. Once in three or four years we get a grand day's sport in the big swamp; but for one good day we have ten bad ones. However, we are sure to find a dozen birds or so in Hell-hole, and a bevy of quail in the Captain's swamp; shan't we, Tom?"

" Yes, if we gits so far; but somehow or other

I rather guess we'll find quite a smart chance o' cock. Captain Read was down there a' Satter-day, and he saw heaps on 'em."

"That's no sure sign. They move very quickly now. Here to-day and there to-morrow," said Archer; "in the large woods, especially. In the small places there are plenty of sure finds."

"There harn't been nothing of frosts yet, keen enough to stir them," said Tom. "I guess we'll find them. And there harn't been a gun shot off this three weeks there. Hoel's wife's ben down sick all the fall, and Halbert's gun busted in the critter's hand."

"Ah! did it hurt him?"

"Hurt him some—skeart him considerable, though. I guess he's quit shootin' pretty much. But come—here we be, boys. I'll keep along the outside, where the walkin's good. You git next me, and Archer next with the dogs, and A——inside of all. Keep right close to the cedars, A——; all the birds 'at you flushes will come stret out this aways. They never flies into the cedar swamp. Archer, how does the ground look?"

"I never saw it look so well, Tom. There is

not near so much water as usual, and yet the bottom is all quite moist and soft."

" Then we 'll get cock for sartain."

" By George !" cried A——, " the ground is like a honeycomb, with their borings ; and as white in places with their droppings, as if there had been a snow fall ! "

" Are they fresh droppings, A—— ?"

" Mark ! Ah, Grouse, Grouse ! for shame ! There he is down. Do you see him, Harry ? "

" Ay, ay ! Did Grouse flush him ?"

" Deliberately, at fifty yards off. I must lick him."

" Pray do ; and that mercifully."

" And that soundly," suggested Frank, as an improvement.

" Soundly *is* mercifully," said Harry, " because one good flogging settles the business ; whereas twenty slight ones only harass a dog, and do nothing in the way of correction or prevention."

" True, oh king !" said Frank, laughing. " Now let us go on ; for, as the bellowing of that brute is over, I suppose ' chastisement has hidden her head.' "

And on they did go ; and sweet shooting they

had of it; all the way down to the thick deep spot, known by the pleasing sobriquet of Hell-hole.

The birds were scattered everywhere throughout the swamp, so excellent was the condition of the ground; scattered so much, that, in no instance, did two rise at once; but one kept flapping up after another, large and lazy, at every few paces; and the sportsmen scored them fast, although scarcely aware how fast they were killing them. At length, when they reached the old creek-side, and the deep black mud-holes, and the tangled vines and leafy alders, there was as usual a quick, sharp, and decisive rally. Before the dogs were thrown into it, Frank was sent forward to the extreme point, and the Commodore out into the open field, on the opposite side from that occupied by fat Tom.

On the signal of a whistle, from each of the party, Harry drove into the brake with the spaniels, the setters being now consigned to the care of Timothy; and in a moment, his loud “Hie, cock! Hie, cock! Pur-r-r—Hie, cock! good dogs!” was succeeded by the shrill yelping of the cockers, the flap of the fast rising birds, and the continuous rattling of shots.

In twenty minutes the work was done ; and it was well that it was done ; for, within a quarter of an hour afterward, it was too dark to shoot at all.

In that last twenty minutes twenty-two cock were actually brought to bag by the eight barrels ; twenty-eight had been picked up, one by one, as they came down the long swamp, and one Harry had killed in the morning. When Timothy met them with the horses at the big oak tree, half-an-hour afterward—for he had gone off across the fields as hard as he could foot it to the farm, as soon as he had received the setters—it was quite dark ; and the friends had counted their game out regularly, and hung it up *secundum artem* in the loops of the new game-bag.

It was a huge day's sport ; a day's sport to talk about for years afterward ; Tom Draw does talk about it now !

Fifty-one woodcock, forty-nine English snipe, twenty-seven quail, and a brace of ruffed grouse. A hundred and twenty-nine head in all, on un-preserved ground, and in very wild walking. It is to be feared it will never be done any more in the vale of Warwick. For this, alas ! was ten years ago.

When they reached Tom's it was decided that they should all return home on the morrow; that Harry should attend to the procuring his purchase money; and Tom to the cheapening of the purchase.

In addition to this, the old boy swore by all his patron saints, that he would come down in spring and have a touch at the snipe he had heerd Archer tell on at Pine Brook.

A capital supper followed, and of course lots of good liquor, and the toast to which the last cup was quaffed, was

LONG LIFE TO HARRY ARCHER, AND LUCK
TO HIS SHOOTING BOX;

to which Frank Forester added,

"I wish he may get it."

And so that party ended; all of its members hoping to enjoy many more like it, and that very speedily.

TOM DRAW'S VISIT TO PINEBROOK.

THE SPORTSMAN'S SPREAD.

THE long cold winter had passed away, and been succeeded by the usual alternations of damp sloppy thaws, and piercing eastern gales, which constitute a North American spring; and now the croaking of the bull-frogs, heard from every pool and puddle, the bursting buds of the young willows, and, above all, the appearance of the Shad in market, announced to the experienced sportsman the arrival of the English snipe upon the marshes. For some days Harry Archer had been busily employed in overhauling his shooting apparatus, exercising his setters, watching every change of wind, and threatening a speedy expedition into the meadows of New Jersey, so soon as three days of easterly rain should be followed by

mild weather from the southward. Anxiously looked for, and long desired, at last the eastern storm set in, cold, chilling, misty, with showers of smoky driving rain ; and Harry for two entire days had rubbed his hands in ecstasy ; while Timothy stood ever in the stable door, his fists plunged deep in the recesses of his breeches' pockets, and a queer smile illuminating the honest ugliness of his bluff visage, patiently watching for a break in the dull clouds, his harness hanging the while in readiness for instant use, with every crest and turret as bright as burnished gold ; his wagon all prepared, with bear-skins and top-coats displayed, and his own kit packed up in prompt anticipation of the first auspicious moment. The third dark morning had dawned dingily ; the rain still drifted noiselessly against the windows, while gutters overflowed, and kennels swollen into torrents announced its volume and duration. There was not then the least temptation to stir out of doors, and, sulky myself, I was employed in coaxing a sulky cigar beside a yet more sulky fire, with an empty coffee cup and a large quarto volume of Froissart upon the table at my elbow, when a quick cheery triple rap at the street door

announced a visitor, and was succeeded instantly by a firm rapid footstep on the stairs, accompanied by the multitudinous pattering and whimpering of spaniels. Without the ceremony of a knock the door flew open ; and in marched, with his hat on one side, a dirty looking letter in his hand, and Messrs. Dan and Flash at his heel, the renowned Harry Archer.

“ Here’s a lark, Frank,” exclaimed that worthy, pitching the billet down upon the table, and casting himself into an arm-chair ; “ Old Tom is to be here to-day to dinner, and wants to go with us to the Snipe Meadow. So we will dine, if it so please you, at my house at three ; I have invited Mac to join us, and start directly after for Pine Brook.”

“ The devil !” I responded, somewhat energetically ; “ what, in this rain ?”

“ Rain ! yes, indeed. The wind has hauled already to the westward of the south, and we shall have a starlight night, and a clear day to-morrow, and grand sport, I’ll warrant you ! Rain ! yes ; I’m glad it *does* rain ; it will keep cockney *gunners* off the meadows.”

“ But will Tom really be here ? How do you know it ? Have you seen him ?”

"Read—read, man!" he responded, lighting the while a dark cheroot, and lugging out my gun-case to inspect its traps. And I in due obedience took up the billet-doux, which had produced this notable combustion. It was a thin, dirty, oblong letter, written *across the lines* upon ruled paper, with a pencil, wafered and stamped with a key, and bearing in round school-boy characters the following direction:—

"for Mr. Harrye Archere Newe Yorke Esqre
69 Merceye streete."

Internally it ran—

"Olde friende

havin to git some grocerees down to Yorke, I reckons to quit here on Satterdaye, and so be i can fix it counts to see you tewndaye for sartain. quasile promises to be considerable plentye, and cocke has come on most ongodly thicke, i was down to Sam Blaines one night a fortnite since and heerd a heape on them a drumminge and chatteringe everywheres round aboute. if snipes is come on yit i reckon I coud git awaye a daye or soe down into Jarsey wayes—no more at preasente from

ever youre olde friende

Thomas Drawe

"i shall looke in at Merceye streete bout three o'clocke dinner time i guesse."

"Well, that matter seems to be settled," answered I, when I had finished the perusal of this most notable epistle. "I suppose he will be here to the fore?"

"Sartain!" responded Archer, grinning; "and do you, for once, if possible—which I suppose it is not—be in time for dinner; I will not wait five minutes, and I shall give you a good feed; pack up your traps, and Tim shall call for them at two. We dine at *three*, mind! Start from my door at half-past five, so as to get across in the six o'clock boat. Hard will be looking out for us, I know, about this time, at Pine Brook; and we shall do it easy in *three* hours, for the roads will be heavy. Come along, dogs. Good bye, Frank. Three o'clock! now don't be late, there's a good lad. Here, Flash! here, Dan!" and, gathering his Macintosh about him, exit Harry.

Thereupon to work I went with a will; rummaged up gun, cleaning rod, copper caps, powder horns, shot pouch, and all the etceteras of shooting, which, being always stowed away with so much care at the end of one season, that they are undiscoverable at the beginning of the next, are sources of eternal discomfiture to those most all-accomplished geniuses, hight sportsmen's servants: got out and greased my fen boots with the fit admixture of tallow, tar, beeswax, and Venice turpentine; hunted up shooting jacket, cordu-

roys, plaid waistcoat, and check shirts; and, in fact, perpetrated the detested task of packing, barely in time for Timothy, who, as he shouldered *my* portmanteau, and hitched up the waistband of *his own* most voluminous unmentionables, made out, in the midst of grins and nods and winks, to deliver himself to the following effect—

“Please sur, measter says, if you ple-ase to moind three o’t clock; for he ’ll be dommed, he said, please Measter Forester, av he waits haaf a minit—”

“Very well, Tim, very well; that ’ll do; I ’ll be ready.”

“And Measter Draw be coom’d tew; nay but Ay do think ’at he’s fatter noo than iver; ecod Ayse laff to see him doon i’ t’ mossy meadows laike; he ’ll swear, Ayse warrant him.”

And with a burst of merriment, that no one pair of mortal lips save Timothy’s alone could ever have accomplished, he withdrew, leaving me to complete my toilet; in which, believe me, gentle reader, mindful of a good feed and of short law, I made no needless tarrying.

The last stroke of the hour appointed had not yet stricken when I was on the steps of Harry’s

well-known snug two-storied domicile ; in half a minute more I was at my ease in his study, where, to my no small wonder, I found myself alone, with no other employment than to survey, for the nine hundredth time, the adornments of that exquisite model for that most snug of all things, a cozy bachelor's peculiar snuggery. It was a small back room, with two large windows looking out upon a neatly trimmed grass-plat bordered with lilacs and laburnums ; its area, of sixteen feet by fourteen, was strewn with a rich Turkey carpet, and covered with every appurtenance for luxury and comfort that could be brought into its limits without encumbering its brief dimensions. A bright steel grate, with a brilliant fire of Cannel coal, occupied the centre of the south side facing the entrance, while a superb bookcase and secretaire of exquisite mahogany filled the recess on either hand of it, their glass doors showing an assortment, handsomely bound, of some eight hundred volumes, classics, and history, and the gems of modern poesy and old romance. Above the mantelpiece, where should have hung the mirror, was a wide case, covering the whole front of the pier, with doors

of plate glass, through which might be discovered, supported on a rack of ebony, and set off by a back-ground of rich crimson velvet, the select armory, prized above all his earthly goods by their enthusiastic owner—consisting of a choice pair of twin London-made double-barrels, a short splendidly finished ounce-ball rifle, a heavy single pigeon gun, a pair of genuine Kuchenreuter's nine-inch duelling pistols, and a smaller pair by Joe Manton for the belt or pocket—all in the most perfect order, and ready for immediate use. Facing this case upon the opposite wall, along the whole length of which ran a divan or wide low sofa of crimson damask, hung two oil paintings, originals by Edward Landseer, of dogs, hounds, terriers, and all in fact of canine race, mongrels of low degree alone excepted; under these were suspended, upon brackets, two long duck guns, and an array of tandem and four-horse whips, besides two fly-rods, and a cherry-stick Persian pipe, ten feet at least in length. The space between the windows was occupied by two fine engravings, one of the Duke of Wellington, the other of Sir Walter in his study—Harry's political and literary idols; a library centre table, with an inkstand of

costly *buhl*, covered with periodicals and papers, and no less than four sumptuous arm-chairs of divers forms and patterns, completed the appointments of the room; but the picture still would be incomplete, were I to pass over a huge tortoise-shell Tom Cat, which dozed upon the rug in amicable vicinity to our old friends the spaniels Dan and Flash. It did not occupy me quite so long to take a survey of these well-remembered articles as it has done to describe them; nor, in fact, had that been the case, should I have found the time to reconnoitre them; for scarcely was I seated by the fire, before the ponderous trampling of Old Tom might be heard on the staircase, as in vociferous converse with our host he came down from the chamber, wherein, by some strange process of persuasion assuredly peculiar to himself, Harry had forced him to go through the ceremony of ablution, previous to his attack upon the viands, which were in truth not likely to be dealt with more mercifully in consequence of this delay. Another moment, and they entered—“Arcades ambo” duly rigged for the occasion—Harry in his neat claret-coloured jockey coat, white waistcoat, corduroys, and gaiters; Tom in

canary-coloured vest, sky-blue dress coat with huge brass buttons, grey kerseymere unmentionables, with his hair positively brushed, and his broad jolly face clean shaved, and wonderfully redolent of soap and water. The good old soul's face beamed with unfeigned delight, and grasping me affectionately by the hand—

"How be you?" he exclaimed; "how be you, Forester? you looks well, anyways."

"Why, I am well, Tom," responded I; "but I shall be better after I've had that drink that Archer's getting ready; *you're* dry, I fancy?"

"Sartain!" was the expected answer; and in a moment the pale Amontillado sherry and the bitters were paraded; but no such d—d washy stuff, as he termed it, would the old Trojan look at, much less taste; and Harry was compelled to produce the liquor stand, well stored with potent waters, when at the nick of time McTavish entered in full fig for a regular slap-up party, not knowing at all whom he had been asked to meet. Not the least discomposed, however, that capital fellow was instantly at home, and as usual up to every sort of fun.

"What, Draw," said he, "who the devil thought

of seeing you here?—when did you come down? Oh! the dew, certainly," he continued, in reply to Archer, who was pressing a drink on him—"the mountain dew for me—catch a Highlander at any other dram, when *Whisky's* to the fore—eh, Tom?"

"Catch you at any dram, exceptin' that what's strongest. See to him now!" as Mac tossed off his modicum, and smacked his lips approvingly; "see to him now! I'd jist as lief drink down so much fire, and *he* pours it in—pours it in, jist like as one it was mother's milk to the d—d critter."

"Ple-ase, Sur, t'dinner's re-ady," announced Timothy, throwing open the folding-doors, and displaying the front room with a beautiful fire blazing, and a good old-fashioned round table covered with exquisite white damask-linen, and laid with four covers, each flanked by a most unusual display of glasses—a mighty bell-mouthed rummer, namely, on a tall slender stock, with a white spiral line running up through the centre, an apt substitute for that most awkward of all contrivances, the ordinary champagne glass—a beautiful green hock goblet, with a wreath of grapes and vine leaves wrought in relief about

the rim—a massy water tumbler elaborately diamond-cut—and a capacious sherry-glass, so delicate and thin that the slender crystal actually seemed to bend under the pressure of your lip. Nor were the liquors wanting in proportion. Two silver wine-coolers, all frosted over with the exudations from the ice within, displayed the long necks of a champagne flask and a bottle of Johannisbergher, and four decanters hung out their labels of port, Madeira, brown sherry, and Amontillado—while two or three black copper-wired bottles, in the chimney-corner, announced a stock of heavy-wet, for such as should incline to malt. I had expected from Tom's lips some preternatural burst of wonder at this display of preparation, the like of which, as I conceived, had never met his eyes before; but whether he had been indoctrinated by previous feeds at Harry's hospitable board, or had learned by his own native wit the difficult lesson of *nil admirari*, he sat down without any comment, though he stared a little wildly, when he saw nothing eatable upon the table, except a large dish of raw oysters, flanked by a lemon and a cruet of cayenne. With most ineffable disdain he waved off the plate which

Tim presented to him, with a “G—d d—n you, I arnt a goin to give my belly cold with no such chillin’ stuff as that. I’d like to know, now, Archer, if this bees all that you’re a goin to give us—for if so be it is, I’ll go stret down to the nigger’s yonder, and get me a beef-steak and onions?”

“ Why not exactly, Tom,” responded Archer, when he could speak for laughing; “ these are merely for a whet to give us an appetite.”

“ A d—d queer sort of *wet*, I think. Why I’d have thought that ere rum, what McTavish took, would have been wet enough, till what time as you got at the champagne—and, as for appetite, I reckon now a man whose guts is always cravin—cravin, like yours be, had better a taken some-*thin dry* to keep it down like, than a *wet* to moisten it up more.”

By this time the natives, which had so moved Tom’s indignation, were succeeded by a tureen of superb mutton broth, to which the old man did devote himself most assiduously, while Mac was loud in approbation of the brouse, saying it only wanted bannocks to be perfection.

“ D—n you, you’re niver satisfied—you aint”—

Tom had commenced, when he was cut short by “The sherry round, Tim,” from our host; “you’d better take the brown, Tom, it’s the strongest!” The old man thrust his rummer forth, as being infinitely the biggest, and—Timothy persisting in pouring out the strong and fruity sherry into the proper glass—burst out again indignantly—

“I’d be pleased to know, Archer, now, why you puts big glasses on the table, if you don’t mean they should be drinked out of?—to tantalize a chap, I reckon”—down went the wine at one gulp, and the exquisite aroma conquered—he licked his lips, sighed audibly, smiled, grinned, then laughed aloud. “I see—I see,” he said at last, “you reckon it’s too prime to be drinked out of big ones—and I dunknow but what you’re right too—but what on airthe is we to drink out of these? not *water*, that I know! leastways, I niver see none in this house, no how.”

“The green one is for brandy, Tom,” McTavish answered.

“Ey, ey!” Tom interrupted him; “and they makes them *green*, I guess, so as no one shall see how much a body takes; now that’s what I does call *genteel!*”

"And this large plain one," added Mac, looking as grave as a judge, and lifting one of the huge champagne glasses, "is a dram glass for drinking Scotch whiskey—what they call in the Highlands a thimblefull."

"They take it as a medicine there, you see, Tom," continued Archer; "a preventive to a disease well known in those parts, called the Scotch fiddle—did you ever hear of it?"

"Carnt say," responded Tom, "what like is't?"

"Oh, Mac will tell you, he suffers from it sadly—didn't you see him tuck in the specific?—it was in compliment to him I had the *thimbles* set out to-day."

"Oh! that's it, aye?" the fat man answered.
"Well, I don't care if I do," in answer to Harry's inquiry whether he would take some boiled shad, which, with caper sauce, had replaced the soup—"I don't care if I do—shads isn't got to Newburgh yet, leastways I harnt seen none."

Well might he say that, by the way, for they had scarce appeared in New York, and were attainable now only at the moderate rate of something near their weight in silver. After the fish, a dram of Ferintosh was circulated in one small glass, exquisitely carved into the semblance of a

thistle, which Draw disposed of with no comment save a passing wonder that when men could get apple-jack, they should be willing to take up with such smoky trash as that.

A saddle of roast mutton, which had been hanging, Harry said, six weeks, a present from that excellent good fellow, the Captain of the Swallow, followed, and with it came the split-corks. "By heavens," I cried, almost involuntarily, "what a superb champagne!" suffering, after the interjection, something exceeding half-a-pint of that delicious, dry, high-flavoured, and rich-bodied nectar to glide down my gullet.

"Yes," answered Harry, "yes. Alack, that it should be the last! This is the last but one of the first importation of the Crown; no such wine ever came before into this country, no such has followed it. We shall discuss the brace to-day—what better opportunity? Here is McTavish, its originator, the best judge in the land! Frank Forester, who has sipped of the like at Crockie's, and a place or two beside, which we could mention; myself, who am not slow at any decent tipple; and Thomas Draw, who knows it, I suppose, from *Jarsey cider!*"

"Yes, and I knows it from the *Jarsey cham-*

pagine tew, which you stick into poor chaps, what you fancies doosn't know no better; give me some more of that ere mutton and some jelly—you are most d—d sparin of your jelly now—and Timothy, you snoopin rascal, fill this ere thimblefull agin with that Creawn wine."

Wild fowl succeeded, cooked to a turn, hot claret duly qualified with cayenne in a sauce-boat by their side, washed down by the last flask of Mac's champagne, of which the last round we quaffed *sorrowfully*, as in duty bound, to the importer's health, and to the memory of the crowned head departed—the *only* crown, as Harry in his funeral oration truly and pithily observed, which gives the lie to the assertion that "*uneasy lies the head that wears a crown.*"

No womanish display of pastry marred the unity of this most solemn masculine repast; a Stilton cheese, a red herring, with Goshen butter, pilot bread, and porter, concluded the rare banquet. A plate of devilled biscuit, and a magnum of Latour, furnished forth the dessert, which we discussed right jovially; while Timothy, after removing Harry's guns from their post of honour above the mantel-piece to their appropriate cases, stole away to the stable to prepare his cattle.

"Now, boys," said Harry, "make the most of your time. There is the claret, the best in my opinion going—for I have always prized Mac's black-sealed Latour far above Lynch's Margaux—yes, even above that of '25. For Lynch's wine, though exquisitely delicate, was perilous thin; I never tasted it without assenting to Serjeant Bothwell's objection, 'Claret's ower cauld for my stomach,' and desiring like him to qualify it 'wi a tass of *eau de vie*.' Now this wine has no such fault, it has a body——"

"I don't know, Archer," interrupted Tom, "what that ere serjeant meant with his d—d *o di ree*, but I know now that I'd a d—d sight rayther have a drink o' *brandy*, or the least mite of apple-jack, than a whole keg of this red rot-gut!"

"You've hit the nail on the head, Tom," answered I, while Harry, knowing the old man's propensities, marched off in search of the liquor stand—"It *was* brandy that the serjeant meant!"

"Then why the devil didn't he say brandy, like a man—instead of coming out with his d—d snivelling *o di ree*?"

"Why, Tom," said I, in explanation, "he admired your favourite drink so much, that he used

the French name as most complimentary; it means *water of life!*"

"What, he *watered* it too, did he? I thought he must be a d—d poor drinkin' man, to call things out of their right names. Precious little of the raal stuff had he ever drinked, I reckon, watered or not—*o di vee!* D—n all such Latin trash, says I. But here 't comes. Take a drop, doo, McTavish, it's better fifty times, and healthier tew, than that eternal d—d sour old vinegar; take a drop, *doo!*"

"Thank you, *no*," answered McTavish, well contented with his present beverage, and after a pause went on addressing Archer—"I wish to heaven you 'd let me know what you were up to, I 'd have gone along."

"What hinders you from going now?" said Harry. "I can rig you out for the drive, and we can stop at the Carlton, and get your gun, and the rest of your traps. I wish to the Lord yon would!"

"Oh, oh!" Tom burst out on the instant; "oh, oh! I won't go, sartain, less so be McTavish concludes on going tew; we carn't do nothing without him."

It was in vain, however, that we all united in

entreating him to go along ; he had business to do to-morrow—he was afraid of getting his feet wet, and fifty other equally valid excuses, till Harry exclaimed, “It’s no use, I can tell you ; Donald’s bluid’s up, and there’s an end of it.”

Whereat McTavish laughed, and saying that he did not think, for a very short-sighted man, snipe-shooting up to his waist in water, and up to his knees in mud, *was* the great thing it is cracked up to be, filled himself a pretty sufficient dose of hot toddy, and drank to our good luck. Just at this moment, up rattled, ready packed, with the dogs in, the gun-cases stowed, and store of top-coats, capes, and bear-skins, all displayed, the wagon to the door.

“I need not tell you, Mac,” cried Archer, as he wrung the gallant Celt by the hand, “to make yourself at home—we must be off, you know ;”—then opening the window,—“Hand in those coats, Timothy, out of that drizzling rain ; I thought you had more sense.”

“Nay, then, they’re no but just coom fra under t’ aprons,” responded Tim, not over and above delighted at the reflection on his genius; “they’re droy as booans, Ayse warrant um.”

"Well, hand them in then, hand them in. Where's *your* coat, Tom?—that's it; now look here, buckle on this crape of mine over *your* shoulders, and take this India-rubber hood, and tie it over your hat, and you may laugh at *four-and-twenty-hours'* rain, let alone two. You have got toggery enough, Frank, I conclude—so here goes for myself." Whereupon he indued, first a pea-jacket of extra pilot-cloth, and a pair of English mud-boots, buttoning to the mid-thigh; and, above these, a regular box-coat of stout blue dreadnought, with half a dozen capes; an oil-skin covered hat, with a curtain to protect his neck and ears, fastening with a hook and eye under the chin, completing his attire. In we got, thereupon, without more ado. Myself and Timothy, with the two setters in the box-seat behind, the leathern apron unrolled and buttoned up, over a brace of buffalo robes, hairy side inward, to our middles. Harry and Tom in front, with one superb black bear-skin drawn up by a ring and strap to the centre of the back rail between them, and the patent waterproof apron hooked up to either end of the seat—the effeminacy of umbrellas we despised—our cigars lighted, and our bodies duly muffled up, off

we went, at a single chirrup of our driver, whose holly four-horse whip stood in the socket by his side unheeded, as with his hands ungloved, and his beautiful, firm, upright seat upon the box, he wheeled off at a gentle trot, the good nags *knowing* their master's hand and voice, as well as if they had been his children, and *obeying* them far better.

Our drive, it must be admitted, through the heavy rain was nothing to brag of. Luckily, however, before we had got over much more than half our journey, the storm gradually ceased, as the night fell; and, by the time we reached the big swamp, it was clear all over the firmament; with a dark, dark blue sky, and millions of stars twinkling gaily—and the wind blowing freshly, but pleasantly, out of the nor-norwest.

"Did I not tell you so, boys?" exclaimed Archer, joyously pointing with his whip to the bright skies—"we'll have a glorious day tomorrow." Just as he spoke, we reached the little toll-gate by the Morris Canal; and, as we paused to change a fifty-cent piece, what should we hear, high in air, rapidly passing over our heads, but the well-known "*skeap! skeap!*!"

the thin shrill squeak of unnumbered snipe, busy in their nocturnal voyage ; and within an hour thereafter we arrived at our journey's end, where a glass all round of tip-top champagne brandy—a neat snug supper of capital veal cutlets, ham and eggs, and pork steaks and sausages, finished the day ; and tired enough we went to bed early and dreamed.

THE SNIPE.

"WHAT sort of a morning is it, Timothy?" asked I, rubbing my eyes, as I sat bolt upright in bed on the irruption of that *fidus Achates*, some half-hour before sunrise, into my little dormitory; "What sort of a morning is it?"

"A varry bonny mornin', Measter Frank," responded he; "there was a leetle tooch o' whaite frost aboot midnaight, but sin't' moon set, there's been a soop o' warm ra-ain, and it's dooll noo, and saft loike, wi' t' wind sootherly—but it's boon to be nooght at all, Ayse warrant it. T' soon 'll be oot enoo—see if he beant—and t'snaipe 'll laike laike steans. Ayse awa noo, and fetch t' het watter—t' ve-al cootlets is i' t' pann, and John Van Dyne he's been a wa-aiting iver sin't got laught."

"That's not very long, then," answered I, springing out of bed, "at all events; for it's as dark as pitch now; bring me a candle, I can't

shave by this light ; there, leave the door into the parlour open, and tell John to come in and amuse me while I'm shaving. Is Mr. Archer up?"

" Oop? weel Ay wot he is oop ; and awa wi' Measter Draa, and t'lang goons, doon to t' brigg ; to watch t' doocks flay, but Van Dyne says t' doocks has dean flaying."

" Yes, yes—they 'se quit sartin," answered a merry voice without ; and in stalked John, the best fowl-shot, the best snipe-marker, the best canoe-paddler, and the best fellow every way, in New Jersey.

" How are you, John ? — any birds on the Piece ? "

" Nicely," he answered, to my first query—" nicely"—shaking me warmly by the hand ; and, after a pause, added, " I can't say as there be ; the Piece is too wet altogether."

" Too wet—eh ? that 's bad, John."

" Lord, *yes*—too wet entirely ; I was half over it with the canoe last week, and did'nt see—no, not half-a-dozen, and they was round the edges like, where there was'nt no good lying ; there was a heap o' yellow-legs, though, and a smart chance o' plover ? "

"Oh, d—n the plover, John ! but shall we find no snipe ? "

"Not upon neither of the Pieces, no how—but there was heaps of them a flyin' over all last night; yes, yes ! I guess Archer and I can fix it so as we 'll git a few—but, do tell, who 's that darned fat chap as I see goin' down"—

Here he was interrupted by the distant report of a heavy gun, followed almost upon the instant by a second.

"Ding !" he exclaimed, "but there 's a flight now, arn't there ? I guess now, Mr. Forester, I 'd as well jist run down with old Shot, leastwise he 'll fetch um, if so be they 've fallen in the water."

"Do, do !" cried I, "by all means, John ; and tell them to come back directly ; for half the breakfast 's on the table, and I 'll be ready by the time they 're here."

By the time I had got my jacket on, and while I was in the act of pulling up my long fen boots before the cheerful fire, I perceived by the clack of tongues without, that the sportsmen had returned ; and the next moment Harry entered, accompanied by fat Tom in his glory, with no

less than two couple and a half of that most beautiful and delicate of wild-fowl, the green-winged teal.

"That's not so bad, Frank," exclaimed Harry, depositing, as he spoke, his heavy single-barrel in the chimney-corner, and throwing himself into an arm-chair; "that's not so bad for ten minutes' work, is it?"

"Better a d—d sight," Tom chimed in, "than layin' snoozin' till the sun is high; but that's the way with these etarnal drinkin' men, they does keep bright just so long as they keeps a liquorin'; but when that's done with, you don't hear nothin' more of them till noon, or arter. D—n all sick drunken critters."

"That's a devilish good one," answered I; "the deuce a one of you has shaved, or, for that matter, washed his face, to the best of my belief; and then, because you tumble out of bed like Hottentots, and rush out, gun in hand, with all the accumulated filth of a hard day's drive, and a long night's sweat, reeking upon you, you abuse a Christian gentleman, who gets up soberly, and dresses himself decently, for idleness and what not!"

"Soberly!" answered Tom; "soberly! Jest hear, now, Harry—soberly!—jest like as though he hadn't a had his bitters, and d—d *bitter* bitters, too!"

"Not a drop, upon honour," I replied; "not a drop this morning."

"What?—ho, ho! that's the reason, then, why you're so 'tarnal cross. Here, landlord, bring us in them cider sperrits—I harnt had only a small taste myself—take a drink, Frank, and you'll feel slick as silk torights, I tell you."

"Thank you, *no!*" said I, falling foul of the veal cutlets delicately fried in batter, with collops of ham interspersed, for which my worthy host is justly celebrated—"thank you, *no!* bitters are good things in their way, but not when breakfast treads so close upon the heels of them."

"Tak a soop, Measter Frank—tak a soop, sur!" exhorted Timothy, who was bearing around a salver laden with tumblers, the decanter gracing his better hand. "Tak a soop, thou 'lt be all t' betther for 't enoo. Measter Draa's i' t' roight o' t'. It's varry good stooff Ay'se oophaud it."

"I don't doubt that at all, Tim; natheless I'll be excused just now."

I was soon joined at the table by the fat man and Archer, who were so busily employed in stowing away what Sir Dugald Dalgetty terms provant, that few words passed between us. At length, when the *furor edendi* was partially suppressed—"Now then, John," said Harry, "we are going to be here two days—to-morrow, that is, and to-day—what are we to beat, so as to get ground for both days? Begin with the long meadow, I suppose, and beat the *ties* toward the small piece home, and finish here before the door."

"That's it, I reckon," answered the jolly Dutchman; "but you knows pretty nigh as well as I can tell you."

"Better, John, better, if I knew exactly how the ground was—but that will be the driest, won't it?"

"Sartain," replied the other; "but we 'll get work enough without beating the ground here-aways before the house; we 'll keep that to begin upon to-morrow, and so follow up to the big meadow, and to Loises, and all along under the widow Mulford's, if it holds dry to-day; and somehow now I kind o' guess it will. There 'll

be a heap o' birds there by to-morrow—they were a-flyin' cur'ous, now, last night, I tell you."

"Well, then, let us be moving. Where's the game-bag, Timothy? give it to John. Is the brandy-bottle in it, and the luncheon? eh?"

"Ay, ay! Sur," answered Tim; "t' brandy 's t' big wicker bottle, wi' t' tin cup—and soom cauld pork and crackers i' t' gam bag—and a spare horn of powder, wi' a pund in 't. Here, tak it, John Van Dyne, and mooch good may 't do ye—and—haud a bit, man! here's t' dooble shot belt, sling it across your shoulder, and awa wi' you."

Every thing being now prepared, and having ordered dinner to be in readiness at seven, we lighted our cigars and started; Harry, with the two setters trotting steadily at his heels, and his gun on his shoulder, leading the way at a step that would have cleared above five miles an hour, I following at my best pace, Tom Draw puffing and blowing like a grampus in shoal-water, and John Van Dyne swinging along at a queer loping trot behind me. We crossed the bridges and the causeway by which we had arrived the previous night, passed through the toll-gate, and, turning

short to the right-hand, followed a narrow sandy lane for some three quarters of a mile, till it turned off abruptly to the left, crossing a muddy streamlet by a small wooden bridge. Here Harry paused, flung the stump of his cheroot into the ditch, and, dropping the butt of his gun, began very quietly to load, I following his example without saying a word.

"Here we are, Frank," said he; "this long stripe of rushy fields, on both sides of the ditch, is what they call the long meadow, and rare sport have I had on it in my day, but I'm afraid it's too wet now; we'll soon see, though"—and he strode across the fence, and waved the dogs off to the right and left. "You take the right hand, Frank; and, Tom, keep you the ditch bank, all the way; the ground is firmest there; we've got the wind in our favour; a little farther off, Frank, they won't lie hard for an hour or two, at all events; and I don't believe we shall find a bird before we cross the next fence."

Heads up and sterns down, off raced the fleet setters, beating the meadows fairly from the right hand fence to the ditch, crossing each other in mid course, and quartering the ground superbly—

but nothing rose before them, nor did their motions indicate the slightest taint of scent upon the dewy herbage. The ground, however, contrary to Harry's expectations, was in prime order—loose, loamy, moist, black soil, with the young tender grass of spring shooting up every where, bright, succulent and sweet; tall tufts of rushes here and there, and patches of brown flags, the reliques of the by-gone year, affording a sure shelter for the timid waders. The day was cool and calm, with a soft mellow light—for the sun was curtained, though not hidden, by wavy folds of gauze-like mist—and a delicious softness in the mild western breeze, before which we were wending our way, as every one who would bag *snipe* must do, *down wind*. We crossed the second fence—the ground was barer, wetter, splashy in places, and much poached by the footsteps of the cattle which had been pastured there last autumn. See, the red dog has turned off at a right angle from his course—he lifts his head high, straitens his neck and snuffs the air, slackening his pace to a slow guarded trot, and waving his stern gently—Chase sees him, pauses, almost backs.

“Look to, Frank—there’s a bird before him!”

Skeap ! skeap ! skeap !—up they jumped eighty yards off at the least, as wild as hawks ; skimming the surface of the meadow, and still by their shrill squeak calling up other birds to join them, till seven or eight were on the wing together ; then up they rose clearly defined against the sky, and wheeled in short zigzags above the plain, as if uncertain whither they should fly, till at length they launched off straight to the right-hand, and, after a flight of a full mile, pitched suddenly and steeply down behind a clump of newly budding birches.

“ I knows where them jokers be, Mr. Archer ; ” exclaimed Van Dyne.

“ In h—ll, I guess they be,” responded Master Draw ; “ leastwise they flew far enough to be there, any how ! ”

“ No, no, Tom, they ‘ve not gone so very far,” said Archer, “ and there’s good lying for them there ; I shall be satisfied if they all go that way. To-ho ! to-ho ! ” he interrupted himself, for the dogs had both come to a dead point among some tall flags ; and Shot’s head cocked on one side, with his nose pointed directly downward, and his brow furrowed into a knotty frown, showed that

the bird was under his very feet. "Come up, Tom—come up, you old sinner—don't you see Shot's got a snipe under his very nose?"

"Well, well, I sees," answered Tom; "I sees it, d—n you! but give a fellow time, you'd best, in this etarnal miry mud-hole!" and, sinking mid-leg deep at every step, the fat man floundered on, keeping, however, his gun ever in position, and his keen quick eye steadily fixed on the staunch setter.

"Are you ready, now? I'll flush him," exclaimed Harry, taking a step in advance; and instantly up sprang the bird, with his sharp, thrice-repeated cry, and a quick flutter of his wings, almost straight into the air over the head of Tom, striving to get the wind.

Bang! Draw's first barrel was discharged, the snipe being at that moment scarce ten feet from the muzzle, the whole load going like a bullet, of course harmlessly!—his second followed, but, like the first, in vain; for the bird, having fairly weathered him, was flying very fast, and twisting all the time, directly up wind. Then Harry's gun was pitched up, and the trigger drawn almost before the butt was at his shoulder. Down went the bird; slanting away six yards, though killed

stone dead, in the direction of his former flight, so rapidly had he been going when the shot struck him.

“Mark, mark!” I shouted, “Harry. Mark, mark! behind you!” as three more birds took wing, before the red dog, and were bearing off, too far from me, to the right-hand, like those which had preceded them. I had, when I cried “mark,” not an idea that he could possibly have killed one; for he had turned already quite round in his tracks, to shoot the first bird, and the others had risen wild, in the first place, and were now forty yards off at the least; but quick as thought he wheeled again, cocking his second barrel in the very act of turning, and sooner almost than I could imagine the possibility of his even catching sight of them, a second snipe was fluttering down wing-tipped.

“Beautiful, beautiful, indeed!” I cried involuntarily; “the quickest and the cleanest double-shot I have seen in many a day.”

“It warnt so d—d slow, no how,” replied Tom, somewhat crest-fallen, as he re-loaded his huge demi-cannon.

“Slow, you old heathen! if you could shoot better than a boy five years old, we should have had three birds. I could have got two of those

last just as well as not, if you had knocked the first down like a Christian sportsman—but look! look at those devils,” Harry went on, pointing toward the birds, which had gone off, and at which he had been gazing all the time; “confound them, they’re going to drum!”

And so indeed they were; and for the first time in my life I beheld a spectacle, which I had heard of indeed, but never had believed fully, till my own eyes now witnessed it. The two birds, which had been flushed, mounted up! up! scaling the sky in short small circles, till they were quite as far from this dull earth, as the lark, when “at heaven’s gate he sings”—and then dropped plumb down, as it would seem, fifty feet in an instant, with a strange drumming sound, which might be heard for a mile or more. Then up they soared again, and again repeated their manœuvre; while at each repetition of the sound another and another bird flew up from every part of the wide meadow, and joined those in mid ether; till there must have been, at the least reckoning, forty snipe soaring and drumming within the compass of a mile, rendering the whole air vocal with that strange quivering hum, which has been stated by

some authors—and among these by the ingenious and observant Gilbert White—to be ventriloquous; although it is now pretty generally, and probably with justice, conceded to be the effect of a vibratory motion of the quill feathers set obliquely, so as to make the air whistle through them. For above an hour did this wild work continue; not a bird descending from its “bad eminence,” but, on the contrary, each one that we flushed out of distance, for they would not lie to the dogs at all, rising at once to join them. “We have no chance,” said Harry, “no chance at all of doing any thing, unless the day changes, and the sun gets out hot, which I fear it won’t. Look out, Tom, watch that beggar to your right there; he has done drumming, and is going to light;” and, with the word, sheer down he darted some ninety yards from the spot where we stood, till he was scarce three feet above the marsh; when he wheeled off, and skimmed the flat, uttering a sharp harsh clatter, entirely different from any sound I ever heard proceed from a snipe’s bill before, though in wild weather in the early spring time I have heard it since, full many a day. The cry resembled more the cackling of a hen which has just laid an egg, than any other sound I can

compare it to; and consisted of a repetition some ten times in succession of the syllable *kek*, so hard and jarring that it was difficult to believe it the utterance of so small a bird. But if I was surprised at what I heard, what was I when I saw the bird alight on the top rail of a high snake fence, and continue there five or ten minutes, when it dropped down into the long marsh grass. Pointing toward the spot where I had marked it, I was advancing stealthily, when Archer said, "You may try if you like, but I can tell you that you won't get near him!" I persevered, however, and fancied I should get within long shot, but Harry was quite right, for he rose again, skeap! skeap! and went off as wild as ever, towering as before, and drumming; but for a short time only, when, tired apparently of the long flight he had already taken, he stooped from his elevation with the same jarring chatter, and alighted—this time to my unmitigated wonder—upon the topmost spray of a large willow tree which grew by the ditch side.*

* I am aware that this will be difficultly believed even in the United States. But I will not, on that account, fail to record so singular a fact. Not a week before I saw this myself, I was told of the fact by a gentleman, since an alderman, of New York; and, I am now ashamed to say, doubted it. Michael Sanford, of Newark, N. J., was along with me, and can certify to the fact.

"It's not the least use, not the least, pottering after these birds now," said Harry. "We'll get on to the farther end of the meadows, where the grass is long, and where they may lie something better; and we'll beat back for these birds in the afternoon, if Dan Phœbus will but deign to shine out."

On we went, therefore, Tom Draw swearing strange oaths at the birds, that acted so darnation cur'ous, and at myself and Harry for being such etarnal fools as to have brought him sweatin into them d—d stinkin mud-holes! and I, to say the truth, almost despairing of success. In half-an-hour's walking we did, howeyer, reach some ground, which—yielding far more shelter to the birds, as being meadow land, not pastured, but covered with coarse rushy tussocks—seemed to promise something better in the way of sport; and before we had gone many yards beyond the first fence, a bird rose at long distance to Tom's right, and was cut down immediately by a quick snap-shot of that worthy, on whose temper, and ability to shoot, the firmer ground and easier walking had already begun to work a miracle.

"Who says I can't shoot now, no more than a

five-year old, d—n you?" he shouted, dropping the butt of his gun deliberately, when skeap, skeap! startled by the near report, two more snipe rose within five yards of him. Fluttered he was assuredly, and fully did I expect to see a clear miss—but he refrained, took time, cocked his gun coolly, and letting the birds get twenty yards away, dropped that to his right-hand, killed clean with his second barrel, while Harry doubled up the other in his accustomed style, I not having as yet got a chance of any bird.

"Down, charge!" said Harry; "down, charge! Shot, you villain!"—for the last bird had fallen wing-tipped only, and was now making ineffectual attempts to rise, bouncing three or four feet from the ground, with his usual cry, and falling back again only to repeat his effort within five minutes —this proved too much, as it seemed, for the poor dog's endurance, so that, after rising once or twice uneasily, and sitting down again at his master's word, he drew on steadily, and began roading the running bird, regardless of the score which he might have been well aware he was running up against himself. During this business Chase had sat pretty quiet, though I observed a nervous

twitching of ears, and a latent spark of the devil in his keen black eye, which led me to expect some mischief, so that I kept my gun all ready for immediate action ; and well it was that I did so ; for the next moment he dashed in, passing Shot, who was pointing steadily enough, and picked up the bird after a trifling scuffle, the result of which was that a couple more snipe were flushed wild by the noise. Without a moment's hesitation I let drive at them with both barrels, knocking the right-hand snipe down very neatly ; the left-hand bird, however, pitched up a few feet just as I drew the trigger ; and the consequence was that, as I fancied, I missed him clean.

“ There, there ! you stoopid, blundering, no-sich-thing—there ! *now* who talks of missing ? That was the nicest, prettiest, easiest shot I ever did see ; and you—you shiftless nigger you—you talks to *me* of missing ! ”

“ Shut up, shut up, you most incorrigible old brute ! ” responded Harry, who had been steadily employed in marking the missed bird, as I deemed him. “ Shut up your stupid jaw ! That snipe’s as dead as the old cow you gave us for supper, the last time we slept at Warwick, though from a

different cause ; for the cow, Jem Flyn says, died of the murrain or some other foul rotten disorder ; and that small winged fellow has got a very sufficient dose of blue pill to account for his decease ! So shut up, and keep still, while I take the change out of these confounded dogs ; or we shall have every bird we get near to-day flushed like those two. Ha, Shot ! Ha, Chase ! Down, cha-a-arge —down, cha-a-arge—will you ? will you ? Down, charge !”

And for about five minutes, nothing was heard upon the meadows but the resounding clang of the short heavy dog-whip, the stifled grunts of Shot, and the vociferous yells of Chase, under the merited and necessary chastisement.

“ Down, charge, now, will you ? ” he continued, as, pocketing his whip, he wiped his heated brow, picked up his gun, and proceeded to bag the scattered game. “ There, that job’s done,” he said, “ and a job that I hate most confoundedly it is—but it *must be done* now and then ; and the more severely, when necessary, the more mercifully ! ”

“ Now that’s what I doos call a right down lie,” the fat man interposed. “ You loves it, and you knows you do—you loves to lick them poor dumb

brutes, cause they can't lick back, no how. You, Chase, d—n you, quit mouthing that there snipe —quit mouthing it, I say—else I'll cut out the snoopin soul of you!"

" So much for Tom Draw's lecture upon cruelty to animals—that's what I call rich !" answered Harry. " But come, let us get on. I marked that bird to a yard, down among those dwarf rose-bushes ; and there we shall find, I'll be bound on it, good shooting. How very stupid of me not to think of that spot ! You know, John, we always find birds there, when they can't be found anywhere else."

On we went, after a re-invigorating cup of mountain dew, with spirits raised at the prospect of some sport at last, and as we bagged the snipe which—Harry was right—had fallen killed quite dead, the sun came out hot, broad, and full. The birds were lying thick among the stunted bushes and warm bubbling springs which covered, in this portion of the ground, some twenty acres of marsh meadow ; and as the afternoon waxed warm, they lay right well before the dogs, which having learned the consequences of misdemeanour, behaved with all discretion. *We* shot well ! and the

sport waxed so fast and furious, that till the shades of evening fell we had forgotten—all the three—that our luncheon, saving the article of drams, was still untasted; and that, when we assembled at seven of the clock in Hard's cozey parlour, and shook out of bag and pocket our complement of sixty-three well-grown and well-fed snipe, we were in reasonable case to do good justice to a right good supper.

THE PARTING DRINK.

BREAKFAST concluded, the next morning we pulled our fen boots on, and on the instant up rattled Timothy, who had disappeared a few minutes before, with the well-known drag to the door, guns stowed away, dogs whimpering, and sticking out their eager noses between the railings of the box —game-bags well packed with lots of prog and of spare ammunition.

Away we rattled at a brisk pace, swinging round corner after corner, skilfully shaving the huge blocks of stone, and dexterously quartering the deep ravine-like ruts which grace the roads of Jersey—crossing two or three bridges over as many of those tributaries of the beautiful Passaic, which water this superb snipe-country—and reaching at last a sweep of smooth level road parallel to a long tract of meadows under the widow Mul-

ford's. And here, *mort de ma vie!* that was a shot from the snipe-ground, and right on our beat, too! —Aye! there are two guns, and two, three, pointers! liver and white a brace, and one all liver.

“I know them,” Harry said, “I know them, good shots and hard walkers both, but a little too much of the old school, a little too much of the twaddle and potter system. Jem Tickler there used, when I landed here, to kill as many birds as any shot out of the city—though even then the Jersey boys, poor Ward and Harry T—, gave him no chance; but now, heaven help him! fat Tom here would get over more ground, and bag more snipe, too, in a day! The other is a canny Scot,—I have forgot his name, but he shoots well and walks better. Never mind! we can outshoot them, I believe; and I am sure we can outmaneuvre them. Get away, get away, Bob,” as he flanked the near-side horse under the collar on the inside—“get away, you old thief; we must forereach on them.” Away we went another mile, wheeled short to the left-hand through a small bit of swampy woodland, and over a rough causeway, crossing a narrow flaggy bog, with three straight ditches, and a meandering

muddy streamlet, traversing its black surface. “ Ha! what’s John at there?” exclaimed Harry, pulling short up, and pointing to that worthy crawling on all fours behind a tuft of high bull-rushes toward the circuitous creek. “ There are duck there for a thousand!”—and as he spoke, up rose with splash and quack and flutter, four or five long-winged wild-fowl; bang! went John’s long duck-gun, and simultaneously with the report, one of the fowl keeled over, killed quite dead, two others faltering somewhat in their flight, and hanging on the air heavily for a little space; when over went a second into the creek, driving the water six feet into the air in a bright sparkling shower.

The other three, including the hit bird, which rallied as it flew, dived forward, flying very fast, obliquely to the road; and to my great surprise Harry put the whip on his horses with such vigour, that in an instant both were on the gallop, the wagon bouncing and rattling violently on the rude log-floored causeway. An instant’s thought showed me his object, which was to weather on the fowl sufficiently to get a shot, ere they should

cross the road ; although I marvelled still how he intended to pull up from the furious pace at which he was going in time to get a chance. Little space, however, had I for amazement ; for the ducks, which had not risen high into the air, were forced to cross some thirty yards ahead of us, by a piece of tall woodland, on the verge of which were several woodcutters, with two or three large fires burning among the brushwood. "Now, Tom," cried Harry, feeling his horses' mouths as he spoke, but not attempting to pull up ; and instantly the old man's heavy double rose steadily but quickly to his face—bang ! neatly aimed, a yard ahead of the first drake, which fell quite dead into the ditch on the right-hand of the causeway—bang ! right across Harry's face, who leaned back to make room for the fat fellow's shot, so perfectly did the two rare and crafty sportsmen comprehend one another—and before I heard the close report, the second wild-duck slanted down wing-tipped before the wind, into the flags on the left-hand, having already crossed the road when the shot struck him. The fifth and only now remaining bird, which had been touched by Van

Dyne's first discharge, alighted in the marsh not far from his crippled comrade.

"Beautiful! beautiful indeed!" cried I; "that was the very prettiest thing—the quickest, smartest, and best calculated shooting I ever yet have seen."

"We have done that same once or twice before though—eh, Tom?" replied Harry, pulling his horses well together, and gathering them up by slow degrees—not coming to a dead stop till we had passed Tom's first bird, some six yards or better. "Now jump out, all of you; we have no time to lose—no, not a minute! for we *must* bag these fowl; and those two chaps we saw on Mulford's meadows are racing now at their top speed behind that hill, to cut into the big meadow just ahead of us, you may rely on that. You, Timothy, drive on under that big pin oak, take off the bridles, *halter* the horses to the tree, *not* to the fence, and put their sheets and hoods on, for, early as it is, the flies are troublesome already. Then mount the game-bags and be ready—by the time you're on foot we shall be with you. Forester, take the red dog to Van Dyne, that second bird of his will balk him else, and I sha'n't be surprised if he gets up

again. Pick up that mallard out of the ditch as you go by—he lies quite dead at the foot of those tall reeds. Come, Tom, load up your old cannon, and we'll take Shot, bag that wing-tipped duck, and see if we can't nab the crippled bird, too—come along."

Off we set without further parley ; within five minutes I had bagged Tom's first, a rare green-headed drake, and joined Van Dyne, who, with the head and neck of his first bird hanging out of his breeches pocket, where, in default of gamebag, he had stowed it, was just in the act of pouring a double handful of BB into his Queen Ann's musket. Before he had loaded, we heard a shot across the road, and saw the fifth bird fall to Harry at long distance, while Shot was gently mouthing Draw's second duck, to his unutterable contentment. We had some trouble in gathering the other, for it was merely body-shot, and that not mortally, so that it dived like a fish, bothering poor Chase beyond expression. This done, we re-united our forces, and instantly proceeded to the big meadow, which we found, as Harry had anticipated, in the most perfect possible condition

—the grass was short, and of a delicate and tender green, not above ankle deep, with a rich close black mould, moist and soft enough for boring everywhere, under foot—with, at rare intervals, a slank, as it is termed in Jersey, or hollow winding course, in which the waters have lain longer than elsewhere, covered with a deep, rust-coloured scum, floating upon the stagnant pools. We had not walked ten yards before a bird jumped up to my left-hand, which I cut down; and while I was in the act of loading, another and another rose, but scarcely cleared the grass ere the unerring shot of my two staunch companions had stopped their flight for ever. Some ten yards from the spot on which my bird had fallen, lay one of these wet slanks which I have mentioned—Chase drew on the dead bird and pointed—another fluttered up under his very nose, dodged three or four yards to and fro, and before I could draw my trigger, greatly to my surprise, spread out his wings and settled. Harry and Tom had seen the move, and walked up to join me; just as they came Chase retrieved the snipe I had shot, and when I had entombed it in my pocket, we moved

on all abreast. Skeap! skeap! skeap! Up they jumped, not six yards from our feet, positively in a flock, their bright white bellies glancing in the sun twenty at least in number. Six barrels were discharged, and six birds fell; we loaded and moved on, the dogs drawing at every step, backing and pointing, so foiled was the ground with the close scent: again, before we had gathered the fruit of our first volley, a dozen birds rose all together; again six barrels bellowed across the plain, and again Tom and Harry slew their shots right and left, while I, alas! shooting too quick, missed one! I know what I aver will hardly be believed, but it is true, notwithstanding; a third time the same thing happened, except that instead of twelve, thirty or forty birds rose at the last, six of which came again to earth, within, at farthest, thirty paces, making an aggregate of eighteen shots, fired in less, assuredly, than so many minutes, and seventeen birds fairly brought to bag. These pocketed, by twos and threes Van Dyne had marked the others down in every quarter of the meadow—and, breaking off, singly or in pairs, we worked our will with them. So hard, how-

ever, did they lie, that many could not be got up again at all. In one instance, I had marked four, as I thought, to a yard, between three little stakes, placed in the angles of a plat, not above twenty paces in diameter—taking Van Dyne along with me, who is so capital a marker that for a *dead* bird I would back him against any retriever living—I went without a dog to walk them up. But no! I quartered the ground, re-quartered it, crossed it a third time, and was just quitting it despairing, when a loud shout from John a pace or two behind, warned me they were on wing! Two crossed me to the right, one of which dropped to John's Queen Ann almost as soon as I caught sight of them, and one to my left. At the latter I shot first, and, without waiting to note the effect of my discharge, turned quickly and fired at the other. Him I saw drop, for the smoke drifted, and as I turned my head, I scarcely can believe it now, I saw my first bird falling. I concluded he had fluttered on some small space, but John Van Dyne swears point blank that I shot so quick that the second bird was *on* the ground before the first had reached it. In this—a solitary case, however—I fear John's famed veracity will scarce obtain

for him that credit, or for me that renown, to which he deemed us both entitled.

Before eleven of the clock we had bagged forty-seven birds ; we sat down in the shade of the big pin oak and fed deliciously, and went our way rejoicing toward the upper meadows, fully expecting that before returning we should have doubled our bag.

But, alas ! the hopes of men ! Troy meadows were too dry ; Persipany too wet ; Loise's had been beat already, and not one snipe did we even see or hear, nor one head of game did we bag ; the morning's sport, however, had put us in such merry mood that we regarded not the evening's disappointment, and we sat down in great glee to supper. What we devoured, or what we drank, it boots not to record ; but it was late at night before the horses were ordered, and we prepared for a start.

After the horses were announced as ready, somewhat to my surprise, Harry took old Tom aside, and was engaged for some time in deep conversation ; and when they had got through with it, Harry shook him very warmly by the hand, saying,

"Well, Tom, I am sincerely obliged to you; and it is not the first time either."

"Well, well, boy," responded Tom, "I guess it 'taint the first time as you've said so, though I don't know right well what for neither. Any how, I hope 't won't be the last time as I'll fix you as you wants to be. But come, it's gittin' late, and I've got to drive Hard's horse over to Paterson to-night."

"Oh, that will not be much," said Harry. "It is but nine miles, and we are twenty from New York."

"Any how, we must take a partin' drink, and I stands treat. I showed Beers Hard how to make that egg nog. Timothy, Timothy, you darned critter, bring in that ere egg nog."

This was soon done, and Tom, replenishing all the glasses to the brim, said very solemnly, "This is a toast, boys, *now* a raal bumper!"

Harry grinned conscious. I stood, waiting, wondering.

"Here's luck!" said Tom, "luck to Harry Archer, a landholder in our own old Orange!"

The toast was quaffed in an instant; and, as I drew my breath, I said,

“ Well, Harry, I congratulate you truly. So you have bought the Jem Burt Place ? ”

“ Thanks to old Tom, dog cheap ! ” replied Archer ; “ and I have only to say, farther, that early in the autumn, I hope to introduce you, and all my old friends, to the interior of

MY SHOOTING BOX.

MY SHOOTING BOX.

CHAPTER I.

ENGLISH AND AMERICAN GAME.

IT wanted scarce an hour of sunset, on a calm, bright October evening—that season of unrivalled glory in the wide woodlands of America, wherein the dying year appears to deck herself, as it is told of the expiring dolphin, with such a gorgeousness of short-lived hues as she had never shown in her full flush of summer life and beauty—it wanted, as I have said, scarce an hour of sunset, and all the near and mountainous horizon was veiled as it were by a fine gauze-like drapery of filmy yellow mist, while everywhere the level sunbeams were checkering the scenery with lines of long rich light and cool blue shadow, when a

small four-wheeled wagon, with something sportsmanlike and rakish in its build, might have been seen whirling at a rapid rate over one of the picturesque uneven roads, that run from the banks of the Hudson, skirting the lovely range of the Western Highlands, through one—the fairest—of the river counties of New York. This little vehicle, which was drawn by an exceedingly clever though somewhat cross-made chestnut cob, with a blaze on his face and three white legs, contained two persons with a quantity of luggage, among which a couple of gun-cases were the most conspicuous, and a brace of beautiful and high-bred English pointers. The driver was a smart natty lad, dressed in a dark gray frock, with livery buttons, and a narrow silver cord for a hatband; and, while he handled the ribbons with the quick finger and cool head of an experienced whip, he showed his complete acquaintance with the way, by the readiness and almost instinctive decision with which he selected the right-hand or the left of several acute and intricate turns and crossings of the road. The other was a young gentleman of some five or six and twenty years, finely and powerfully made, though not above the middle

height, with curly light-brown hair and a fair bright complexion, indicative of his English blood. Rattling along the limestone road, which followed the course of a large rapid trout stream, that would in Europe have been termed a river, crossing it now and then on rustic wooden bridges, as it wound in broad devious curves hither and thither through the rich meadow land, they reached a pretty village, embosomed in tall groves and pleasant orchards, crowning a little knoll with its white cottages and rival steeples; but, making no pause, though a neat tavern might well have tempted the most fastidious traveller, they swept onward, keeping the stream on their right-hand, until, as they came to the foot of a small steep ascent, the driver touched his hat, saying—"We have got through our journey now, Sir; the house lies just beyond the hill." He scarce had finished speaking, before they topped the hillock, and turning short to the right-hand, pulled up before a neat white gate in a tall fence, that separated the road from a large piece of woodland, arrayed in all the gorgeous colours wrought by the first sharp frost of autumn. The well-kept winding lane, to which the gate gave access, brought them, within

a quarter of a mile, to a steep rocky bank feathered with junipers, and here and there a hickory or maple shadowing the dense undergrowth of rhododendrons, calmias and azaleas that sprung in rich luxuriance from every rift and cranny of the gray limestone ledges. Down this the road dived, by two rapid zigzags, to the margin of the little river, which foamed along its base, where it was spanned by a single arch, framed picturesquely of gnarled unbarked timber; and then swept in an easy curve up a small lawn, lying fair to the southern sun, to the door of a pretty cottage, which lay midway the northern slope of the valley, its rear sheltered by the hanging woodlands, which clothed the hills behind it to their very summit. A brilliant light was shining from the windows to the right of the door, as if of a merry fire and several candles mingled; and, in a minute or two after the wheels of the wagon rattled upon the wooden bridge, it was evident that the door was thrown open; for a long stream of mellow light burst out on the fast darkening twilight; and the next moment a tall figure, clearly defined against the bright background, was seen upon the threshold. A minute more

and the chestnut cob was pulled up in front of the neat portico, and the young Englishman leaped out and darted up the steps.

“ Well, Fred, you’re here at last.”

“ Harry, old fellow, by Jupiter! but I’m glad to see you!”

“ And so am I right glad, Fred; and really obliged to you for coming up to see me here in the mountains. I would have come down to the river myself for you, but I had to ride over into Deer Park after breakfast, to get a match for Master Bob there,” pointing as he spoke to the chestnut cob, which, not a whit the worse for his long rapid drive, stood champing his light bit and pawing up the gravel, as if he had but just been brought out of his stable. “ I hope he brought you up in good style, Fred?”

“ That he did, Harry; that he did, in prime style! Two hours and forty minutes from—Newburgh, don’t you call it?—up to your gate here; and that’s twenty-eight good miles, I fancy—”

“ Thirty, Fred, thirty; every yard of it. It’s twenty-eight and better to the village; but come in, come in; and, you sir, get out all the traps and put them in the hall till Timothy has time to look to

them, and take Bob round to the stables and go to work upon him. What are those—pointers, Fred? Exactly! well, put them in the little kennel by themselves, and see they are well fed and bedded. Pointers are no use here, Fred. English-broke pointers, I would say—they range too high, and cannot face our coverts. But come in. I was just taking a cup of coffee and a weed; for I dined early, knowing that you could not be here in time; and we will have some supper by-and-by, and in the mean time you shall either join me in the Mocha, or have a long cool drink, or something short, just as you fancy it."

And with the words, my old friend Harry Archer—for the host was no other than that worthy, who had exchanged his *ménage* in the city for a snug shooting box among the hills of Warwick—led his old friend, who had but lately landed from the Boston steamer, through a small vestibule adorned with stands of myrtle and geranium, and two or three camellias, into a narrow hall or passage, the walls of which were decked with several pairs of red deer antlers, whence swung full many a sylvan implement, a map or two of the adjoining States, and several

of Herring's life-like portraits; the champions of the English turf, the winners of the Leger and the Derby.

"This is but a little box, Heneage," said Harry, as they entered; "my *one* spare bed is literal. There were but four rooms in the house when I bought it, unless you count the garrets, which are not habitable; but I have built a kitchen and two or three servants' rooms behind; and so we must make shift till I get rich enough to add some more bed-chambers: the people hereabout swear that I am crazy, and that I lodge my horses and my dogs better than I do myself. But if it is small, Fred, it is snug and clean;" and with the word he threw open a door to the right, and leading his friend into a little library—"this is my snug-gery," he added, "and that," pointing to a door opposite the windows, which were two in number, reaching to the ground and overlooking the lawn and river, "that is my bedroom. Across the *hall*, as we call it by a liberal courtesy, is the dining-room, and behind it your dormitory. Now then, take this arm-chair by the fire—and here comes Timothy—you've not forgotten Timothy, Fred? It's Mister Heneage, Tim!"

"Nay! but Ay's vara glad to see thee," exclaimed Harry's inimitable Yorkshireman, pulling his toplock with his left-hand, while he thrust out the other horny paw with a grin of unfeigned delight. "Ay's very glad to see the i' these pairts—noo, d—n me if Ay isn't! An' hoo's they aw i' Yor'shire?"

"Right well, Tim; all our friends; all that I think of, that's to say—but I see you stick to Mr. Archer, yet, Tim?"

"Stick tull him—weel Ay wot—he wad na get along at aw withoot me. He's got faive horses oot i' t' stable, and seven dogs i' t' kennel; forbye auld Charon—for *he* gangs whaure he wull—and hoo'd he do without Tim Matlock! Nay, nay! Ay's niver quit him, Measter Heneage; but Ay'll gang noo and fetch oop soom hot coffee—or mayhap, sur, you'd take a soop o' t' auld shrub or Glenlivat."

"No, no, Tim, coffee by all means—and now I'll blow a cloud, so hand me—ha! do you stick to the manillas as of old? Well, it is certainly impossible for any thing to be nicer or more comfortable than this."

And well might he say so; for though the

room was small, not above eighteen feet by sixteen, with a low ceiling and large projecting mantelpiece, and though the furniture was simple and by no means expensive, nothing could be more truly or more tastefully complete. A large bookcase of the black walnut of the country filled the recesses on either hand the fire-place, their glass-doors showing a well chosen library of something more than a thousand volumes, classics and history, and the best English poets and romances, with a few French and Italian writers, in elegant and costly bindings. The space above the fire-place was filled, instead of a mirror, by a large case with a sliding front of plate glass, containing an arm-rack lined with crimson velvet, well garnished with two superb twin double-barrelled guns, by Purday; a heavy ounce-ball rifle, by the same prince of makers; a short but large-bored twelve-pound duck-gun; a case of nine-inch pistols, by old Kuchenreuter; a smaller brace by Manton; and three or four hunting knives, of various sizes and construction. On either side the door, which led to the bedchamber, stood a small slab or table, the one arranged with inkstandish, portfolio, *presse papier*, and all the apparatus of the scribe;

the other covered with powder-flasks and shot-pouches, screw-drivers, dog-whips, drinking-flasks, and, in short, every thing a sportsman could require, not thrown about at random, but all displayed symmetrically, and bright and free from dust. The walls were hung with several excellent line engravings, from sporting subjects, by Landseer. The floor was carpeted with a grave but rich Brussels, which was not unpleasantly relieved by the deep crimson curtains and cushions of the massive old-fashioned settees and sofas, with which the room was bountifully furnished. A large round centre-table, with a crimson cloth, supported a tall brass reading-lamp, and was strewn thickly with portfolios of good engravings, an annual or two, the "Spirit of the Times," and the last numbers of the "Turf Register," with several English Sporting Magazines, and other periodicals; but it was now pushed back from the fire toward the large soft-cushioned sofa which occupied the whole length of the opposite wall, and its place taken for the nonce by a small trivet, on which stood an antique salver, with a coffee pot and sugar dish of richly chased and massive silver, a cut-glass cream jug, with a small stand of

liqueurs, two tiny glasses, and two coffee cups of Sevres China. A pile of hickory logs was crackling and flashing cheerfully upon the hearth; a pair of wax candles were blazing on the mantelpiece, the superannuated Russian setter, to whom Tim had alluded, was dozing on the rug; and, heedless of the neighbourhood of her natural foe, a beautiful, soft, tortoise-shell cat sat purring on the arm of Harry Archer's own peculiar settle. Such was the aspect of the room, which Heneage, fresh as he was from London and all the finished comforts of English country houses, in the first month of his first visit to America, pronounced the very acme of perfection, as a bachelor's establishment.

"Wait till you see my stables, and my kennel, my quail-house, where I save them through the winter, my little flower-garden, and my dairy, and my ice-house. We have turned Jacks of all trades, Timothy and I. And now, with the exception of my *old* woman, for—this is a very moral country, and I am, you know, a *very* moral man—to save my character, I got the ugliest and oldest cook in all America—upon my soul I sometimes fancy she must have been in the ark with

Noah!—with the exception, as I say, of my old woman, you have seen all the members of my *ménage*. She cooks, and makes the beds, and cleans the chambers, as she persists in calling the bed-rooms, being of course a Yorkshire woman—Tim would have died had I got even a Northumbrian—and Timothy is butler, and stud-groom, and valet, and game-keeper, and, of late, I believe head gardener; and that imp, Dick, who drove you up, with an extraordinary negro genius, who never takes his clothes off from one year's end to the other, or sleeps in a bed, summer or winter, preferring the hay-loft at all seasons, do all the work of the house, garden, kennel, stable, and of my little farm; just twenty acres, Fred! on which I feed two Alderneys, and fatten yearly a dozen or two of right black-faced Moor mutton.

Meantime the friends discussed their coffee, and puffed their favourite cheroots, and, meeting now for the first time in many years, chatted of many things, and called old scenes to mind, and asked and received tidings of many an ancient friend, and passed, in short, two hours as pleasantly as could have been desired if they had planned it, until the door was opened, and Timothy thrust in

his sleek black head at the aperture, informing them that “T’ sooper was ready noo, and wad be cold if they waited ony langer”—a piece of information which brought them to their legs with speed; and not them only, but Master Charon likewise, who, though he had been voted slow and superfluous in the field, had yet abated nothing in the keenness of his nose, so far at least as meal times were concerned, come as often as they might. The dining-room, which was precisely of the same dimensions with the library, was furnished with the same nice attention to details, the same harmonious taste, which imparted an appearance of luxury and richness to articles in themselves by no means extraordinary. The curtains and all the furniture, as in the other room, were crimson, the hues of the carpet in some sort matching them; a large sideboard of black walnut faced the fire-place, glittering with fine cut-glass and small but beautiful selection of old-fashioned silver, among which shone resplendent a superb cup, or vase, won by the prowess of the owner at the Red House, against no few or mean competitors in pigeon shooting, and two tall richly gilded tankards, watching like sentries on the

flanks of the array. The table was drawn up close to the fire, which blazed with a fierceness that would have been almost intolerable, but for a screen that intercepted a portion of its heat, and was covered by a cloth of dazzling whiteness, whereon was arranged a supper service with two covers, in a style so accurate and tempting as to have pleased the sagest *gourmet*, while the morocco arm-chairs, which stood at either end, promised a world of voluptuous comfort. The whole room was one blaze of light, and nothing could by any means have been conceived more cheerful than the aspect of the whole.

"Now, Fred," said Harry, as they entered, "I trust your drive has given you an appetite, for I have no doubt Timothy has got us something tolerably eatable. What is it, eh, Tim?"

"Nay, sur, Ay's sure Ay canna tell ye; for Ay's been sorting Measter Heneage's things loike, and suppering oop t'twa pointer dogs he brought wi' him."

"Well, well, take off the covers and let us see. Broiled wood-duck here, which I can recommend, Fred; they are as good a bird as flies, excepting always the royal canvass-back; let me give you

a half a one ; with a squeeze of that lemon, and a dash of cayenne, you'll find it more than passable. There, cover those cock up again, Tim, and put them by the fire ; are those the birds I shot yesterday ? Exactly ; that's right !—let's see those side dishes—ha ! cauliflowers *à la crème*, and stewed celery. Now then, Fred, what wine ? There's some dry still champagne in ice there, if you like it ; and some pale sherry here, that I think good ; there's claret in the cellar ; but I think the weather's too cold for bourdeaux ; port does not suit this climate ; but I've got some madeira that will do your heart good.”

“ Oh ! champagne, Harry, champagne for supper always. Your sherry and madeira are dinner wines, *me judice*.”

“ I agree with you, Fred ; open that long neck, Timothy. Well, now, what think you of the wood-duck ?”

“ Excellent ; good indeed ! but why do you call it *wood* duck, Harry ?” answered Heneage, with his mouth half full of the tender juicy broil.

“ Because they live in woods, Fred ; and perch and build their nests in trees.”

“ Oh ! humbug ! that's a touch too much of a good thing, old fellow.”

"It's true, though, every word of it. You'll find game here one thing, and game in England quite another, I can tell you, Master Fred; aye! and covert shooting here, in these wild swamps and wooded hills, a very different sort of matter from a Norfolk battu. The big glasses, Tim, the long-stemmed beakers!" he interposed; and his order was speedily obeyed; and the rich dry champagne stood mantling with no cream, and a few bead-like bubbles only floating around the brim, in two tall half-pint goblets of Venetian crystal.

"By George! but that *is* splendid, Harry," exclaimed Fred Heneage, as the seductive liquor disappeared. "Yes! half a woodcock, if you please."

"No half about the matter, Fred; they are but little chaps, these woodcocks of America; not half so big as ours. But then, they positively swarm here."

"Why, aye!" responded Heneage, receiving the whole bird which Harry sent to him, with all complacency. "Why aye! Frank Forester, whom I saw for an hour or two in New York, told me—by the way, I forgot to tell you that he says he will be here on Friday. Where will you stow him?"

"Oh, I make *point de façon* with Master Frank.

He will take Tim's room, I suppose, who will turn Dick out; that is to say, if he does not prefer a room at old Draw's, in the village. I often stow my supernumeraries there. What did he tell you anent the woodcock?"

"Oh, I don't know; some wondrous yarn or other; I did not pay much attention, or believe one half what he said; something about killing them by hundreds in a day."

"Well, so we do; the Commodore and I bagged last year, between sunrise and sunset, one hundred and fifteen."

"Not really! And how many shall we get to-morrow?"

"Try another glass of champagne, Fred, and then I'll explain. Do you think this too cold?"

"No; perfection! A bit of that cauliflower, if you please. Now, then, about to-morrow."

"Why, Fred, this is *fall* shooting, as we call it here; and in the autumn, birds are not to be found in such swarms as in July; nevertheless, it is a very good year; there has been quite a sharp frost these last three nights to the northward, and they are coming in fast. I have killed none to speak of yet, and not a gun but mine has been fired

in the valley these two months. So I think we are sure of sport. I shall kill from twenty-five to thirty cock off my own gun to-morrow, and Frank would do nearly as much, if he were up here. You, I suppose, will get fifteen—”

“ Cool, that, by Jupiter!” replied Fred Heneage —“ why, I can beat Frank Forester like bricks! ”.

“ You *could*, you mean to say, you *could* beat him three years ago in a Norfolk turnip field.”

“ Yes, could I, or on a Scottish moor, or in an Irish bog.”

“ I dare say—I dare say,” responded Harry, very coolly; “ but you see, Fred, a Scottish moor and an Irish bog are vastly different things from a Yankee swamp, as you will find before you have been out an hour to-morrow. The first requires, I admit, the wind and sinews of a mountaineer, the pluck of a prize fighter, and the endurance of a Captain Barclay; the second cannot be braved with impunity but by one who can ‘bound from hag to hag,’ as Scott has said it, ‘like any Bilhope stag;’ but the unstable bottom, the fallen trunks, the mossy tussocks under foot, the tangled vines and thorny briars woven in strange inextricable mazes about your knees and thighs, and

even up to your breast and face; the dense impenetrable foliage over head; the impossibility of seeing your dog half the time, although he may be on a dead point ten feet from you; the necessity of firing nine shots out of ten, even when pointed, as if they were chance shots; of killing above half your birds, if you kill them at all, by firing on an instinctive calculation of their line, seeing them only 'with the eye of faith,' as poor J. Cypress, Jr. used to call it;—all these things, and the farther fact that two at least of the winged game of these regions—the quail, namely, and the ruffed grouse—are the quickest and strongest on the wing, the hardest to hit at all, and the most difficult to stop by hitting, of any birds that fly—make the odds very great that the best English shot will bungle it cruelly for the first season; and if he shoots well on the second, I call him a right apt disciple. And so I say that if you *could* beat Frank like bricks three years ago, he can beat you three times as badly now. His first year he shot shamefully, though he, like you, had the advantage of beginning in the autumn, when most of the leaf was down. I, on the contrary, commenced in

July, when every thing is in full leaf, and such a flush of foliage, as you cannot conceive from any thing you ever saw at home. Now Frank shoots at least as well again as he did when he left home, and you will not shoot half as well as you did, at least for the first year; after that you will improve at once, and if you stay here three or four seasons you will astonish yourself when you get home, or, what is the same thing, when you by accident get any open shooting."

"Well, it may be so; I suppose it is, if you say so; but I don't know. Did you ever shoot badly here?"

"Not badly; no, Fred," answered Harry, "badly is not the word at all; infamously! I shot infamously the first year."

"And do you really shoot better now than you did at home? you were a good shot always."

"So much so that I very often think it would be impossible for me to miss a shot at all in partridge shooting, or one in six in battu. But come, we have got through our game. Timothy, look alive man; bring the caviare, and devilled biscuits,—and what will you have by way of tipple, Fred? a bowl of mulled wine, or some hot rum

punch? I've got some very old pine-apple rum; or simple whiskey toddy? the Ferintosh is undeniable, I tell you."

"Why, Harry, I believe the rum punch is the thing."

"Very well; see here, Timothy, hand this caviare to Mr. Heneage, and fill us out a thimble-full a piece of that curious white cognac; and look sharp, and bring a tankard full of water screeching hot, and a flask of the rum from the second locker, a bottle of Scotch whiskey, sugar and lemons, and the cigar box. Now then, take a bit of the biscuit, Fred, and a taste of caviare; wash it down with that brandy; that *is* a curiosity; white brandy is rare in this country; but I imported this myself. And now, when Timothy comes back, we'll transplant ourselves to the chimney-corner; have a small trivet just to hold our glasses and materials, and blow a cloud till bed-time."

Many minutes did not elapse before these preparations were effected, the supper table cleared, the smoking punch and toddy brewed to the several tastes of the companions, the choice manillas lighted, and a small cloud of thin gray

smoke curling in lazy wreaths about the heads of either friend. For some brief space they sat in silence, both wrapped, as it appeared, in a voluptuous calm abstraction, the natural consequence, perhaps, of satiated appetite, aided by the soft influence of the soothing weed; but both in reality thinking, and that too rather deeply, on matters growing out of their late conversation.

Harry was pondering in his mind whether of two beats would be preferable for to-morrow—the one being by far the better for woodcock, but in bad rotten ground and exceedingly thick coverts; the other much opener and easier shooting, but not by any means so favourably lying for the long-billed birds of passage; while Heneage was ruminating on all that he had heard, and marvelling not a little, and half doubtful whether he was not the subject of some wilful mystification touching American field sports on the part of his companion. After a while, however, he raised his eyes to a large and fine oil painting which hung over the fire-place, and which, from the accidental position of both the argand lamps on one, and that the right, end of the mantel-piece, was clearly visible in its best

light. At first, his eyes fell on it by mere chance, and then were riveted by the grand massing of the light and shadow, before he had so much as observed the subject of the painting. He was then on the point of speaking, and asking his friend something of the artist, when an idea struck him, and he examined it, not with a critic's only, but a sportsman's eye ; for, like most of the decorations of Harry's shooting box, it was connected with those matters that were for the most part uppermost in the mind of the owner. It was a large and nobly executed piece ; a view of a narrow woodland lane expanding in the foreground of the piece into an open meadow, where it was closed by a set of strong timber bars. The wood and winding lane were actually nature ; the gnarled and mossy trunks of the large trees just gilded on their western edges by the ruddy beams of the declining sun, the rich autumnal foliage over-head here opening to let in long pencilled rays of living yellow lustre, there blackening into twilight shades, impervious to the strongest light ; and the mossy greensward, checkered with slant gleams and long shadow, and the sandy lane most naturally varying from the brightest tints of ochre to

the deepest umber, as it was touched by sunshine, or overhung by heavy foliage. The left-hand foreground of the picture was occupied by a tall oak, its deep brown coppery umbrage casting a massive gloom over the earth below it, while here and there a flickering glance of gold glinted on its rough boll between the sere leaves. In the front of this, brought into strong and palpable relief, for it was in broad light, stood a stout-built gray pony, with a long tail and heavy tangled mane, looking out of the corner of his eye with a half vicious glance, as if more than half inclined to kick at a spaniel, which seemed to be tickling his fore-legs by the feathery motion of his thick silky tail. A saddle lay ungirt by the dog, with its strappings, crupper and stirrups and surcingle, cast in disorder on the ground, as it had been flung down by the smock-frocked urchin who leaned against the rails, holding the bridle carelessly in one hand thrust under his frock, and watching the actions of the principal personage, a stout, athletic man, with shooting-jacket, game-bag, boots and leather leggins, who was employed, a little way advanced before the rest, in smoothing down the feathers of a superb cock-pheasant,

which he was holding up by the neck with his right-hand, its varying and gorgeous hues glittering and glowing in rare mimicry of life. A large hare and small rabbit hung by their heels from the top rails of the fence; while a great pile of game, composed of hares and pheasants only, was heaped up at the sportsman's feet, his double-barrelled gun leaning against a post in the extreme right foreground, a bright and golden glitter falling upon the yellow bank and the light foliage of the bushes just behind it, and sleeping lovingly upon the sere and faded herbage that lay below, with every blade of grass, and shivered stick, and small white pebble, laughing out all distinct and sharp in the soft sunset. No words, however, can describe, so as to convey an idea of its *vraisemblance*, the strong reality and truthfulness of that noble picture; and Harry Archer, as he observed his friend, whom he knew to be an amateur and connoisseur of no mean judgment or ability, said nothing, but, supposing only that he was admiring its very visible and striking beauties, relapsed into his own reverie; from which he was aroused at length by a loud burst of laughter from Fred Heneage. Looking up, not amazed a little at this

sudden interruption, he was encountered by an expression so funnily and joyously triumphant in the face of Fred, that he was constrained to laugh as he asked,

“ What now? what the devil’s in the wind now, Heneage?”

“ So you’ve been humbugging as usual—stuffing me—at your old tricks—hang it! but I’ll pay you for it.”

“ Now what *do* you mean, in the name of all that’s wonderful?” Harry exclaimed, himself quite mystified. “ I have not stuffed you; and, in truth, I cannot even guess what you are driving at.”

“ Oh, no! not you, I warrant you! here you’ve been cramming me all night about ruffed grouse, and quail, and *wood* ducks, and Heaven only knows what else; and making me eat snipe under the name of woodcock—though they were mighty large snipe, I must acknowledge—just for the sake of cramming me that woodcock in America were not woodcock. I suppose you think I have never read about pheasant shooting in New Jersey and Pennsylvania, and partridge shooting in Virginia and New York. But no you don’t—no you don’t, master judge! I am not to be had to-night.”

"Faith! but you *are* had pretty thoroughly. Oh, how I wish Frank Forester were here!—but I'll tell him—I'll tell him, if I die for it, and he shall cook it up for some of the magazines, that's poz. But how did you find out that you were had, Fred?"

"Why, I tell you, I have read books about America, if I never have been here before, and I *know* that there are pheasants in Pennsylvania, and partridges in New York and Virginia."

"Well, well, I grant that—I grant that; but did you chance to read, too, that the partridge of New York is *not* the partridge of Virginia—and farther yet, that the partridge of New York *is* the pheasant of Pennsylvania and New Jersey And farther, once again, that neither the partridge of New York nor the partridge of Virginia is a partridge at all—nor the pheasant of any place on this side the Atlantic a pheasant?"

"No, Harry, I never did read that—and you may just as well stop stuffing me, when I sit here with the proof of your villainy before my eyes."

"Where, Fred—where is the proof?—hang me if I know where you are in the least!—where is the proof?"

"Why this is too much! Do you think I'm

blind, man?—there!—there in that picture!—don't I see pheasants there, and hares too?"

"Oh! yes, Fred—yes, indeed!" shouted Archer, choking down a convulsive laugh, that would burst out, at times almost overpowering him. "Yes, that is it, certainly—and those are hares and pheasants—and that's a right smart Jersey trotter, I some guess—a critter that can travel like a strick; and the boy holding him—that's a Long Island nigger, now, I calkilate,—oh, ya-as! and that's a Yorker on a gunnin' scrape, stringin' them pheasants! ya-as;" and he spoke with so absurd an imitation and exaggeration of the Yankee twang and drawl, that he set Heneage laughing, though he was still more than half indignant.

"No!" he said, when he recovered himself a little,—"no, I didn't say that—the boy is not a nigger."

"A white nigger, I some think!" responded Archer, still on the broad grin.

"No, not a nigger at all—and that does not look much like an American fast trotter either—nor has that man much the cut of a New Yorker."

"No; I should think not *very* much. Negroes

are not for the most part white—and, as you say, American trotters have not *in general* quite so much hair about their fetlocks, or quite such lion manes—it might do for a Canadian, though—but then unluckily they are not apt to be white!—and certainly you might travel from Eastport to Green Bay and not meet a man with laced half-boots and English leggings, unless you chanced to stumble on your most obedient; and as to the blue Leicester smock-frock, such as that lad has got on, this side the Atlantic—but never mind, Fred, never mind. That gray cob is quite as much like Ripton or *Americus*, and that little fat-faced chaw-bacon is as much like a Long Island nigger, and that broad shouldered Yorkshire gamekeeper more like a New York gunner, than those long-tailed, green-headed, golden-breasted pheasants to any American fowl, be he called what he may. Why, Heaven preserve your wits, Fred! That is an English picture, by an exceeding clever Royal Academician. Lee!—Fred, you must have heard of him. ‘A day in the woods’ he called it, and a right good day’s work he has made of it. Now, listen to me; there is not one wild bird or beast

in America, unless it be a few ducks, that is precisely similar to its European congeners. The woodcock is a distinct variety, *Scolopax minor*, rarely exceeding eight, and never eleven ounces—he is red breasted, and is in the northern States a summer bird of passage; coming early in the spring, sometimes before the snow is off the ground, laying, rearing his young, and going off, when the winter sets in, to the rice fields, and warm wet swamps of Georgia and the Carolinas. The bird called in the eastern States the partridge, and everywhere southward and westward of New Jersey the pheasant, is, in reality, a grouse—the ruffed or tipped grouse—*Tetrao umbellus*—a feather-legged, pine-haunting, mountain-loving bird, found in every State, I believe, of the Union, in the Canadas, and even up to Labrador. There are many other grouse in North America, of which none are found in the older States except the *pinnated grouse*, or prairie fowl, formerly found in great abundance in Long Island, New Jersey, and the north-eastern parts of Pennsylvania; though on Long Island it is now quite extinct, and nearly so in Pennsylvania and New Jersey. They are still killed on Martha's Vineyard, a

little island off the coast of Massachusetts, where they are now very rigorously preserved; and in Ohio, Illinois, and all the western States, they literally swarm, on the prairies. The *spruce grouse*, a small and very rare kind, is found in Maine occasionally, and in a portion of New York, between the head waters of the Hudson and the Canada frontier. Four or five other species are found in Labrador, and on the Rocky Mountains, but none of these, though well known to the ornithologist, can be included in the sportsman's list of game. The partridge of Virginia is the quail of New York; commonly known as *perdix Virginiana*—though of late there has been a stiff controversy as to his name and genus. It is proved, I believe, beyond cavil, that he is not exactly a quail, nor a partridge either, but a sort of half-way link between them; the modern naturalists call him an *ortyx*—a very silly name, by the way, since it is only the Greek for quail; to which he is in truth the more nearly connected. His habits are far more like those of the quail than of the partridge, and he should be called quail in the vernacular. If you want to get at the merits of this case, I will lend you a book,

written by my old friend J. Cypress, Jr., and edited by Frank Forester, in which you will find the controversy I have mentioned. These three birds we shall kill to-morrow, and you will be convinced of the truth of what I tell you. Properly speaking, there is no rabbit in America—the small gray fellow, who is commonly so called, sits in a form, and never burrows, nor does he live in congregations—while the large fellow, who is found only in the eastern States, and some parts of New York and New Jersey, turns white in winter, and is in fact a variety of the Alpine hare. The first, I dare say, we may kill to-morrow, certainly not the latter. The snipe, moreover, which is called *English*, to distinguish him from all the thousand varieties of sandpipers, shore birds, and plovers, which are called *bay snipe*, indiscriminately, and from the woodcock, which the country folks call *mud snipe*, *blind snipe*, and *big-headed snipe*, just as their fancy prompts, is not—so say the ornithologists—exactly the same bird as his English brother; although his habits, cry, feeding ground, and so forth, are exactly similar; except, by-the-by, that here he perches on trees sometimes."

"Heavens and earth, what a whopper!" interrupted Heneage.

"Just so I told Sam Bradhurst when he told me so ten years ago, and ten days afterward I saw it myself, in company with Mike Sanford. Bill Roff, of Newark, knows it right well, and has seen them do so himself, and so does Frank."

"You be hanged!" answered Fred.

"You think so now," said Harry, "but you'll know better one of these days. Meantime I have about finished my yarn. All I have got to say more is, that the only birds I have found precisely similar here and in England are the mallard and duck—the teal, which is called here the green-winged, in contradiction to our garganey, which these folks call the blue-winged teal. And now, ring the bell, and fill up a fresh glass of punch."

So said, so done; and ere the tumbler was replenished, Tim made his entry.

"Now, Tim," said Archer, "we shall want breakfast before daybreak—say half-past five o'clock. Do you drink tea or coffee, Fred?—oh, either—very well, then black tea, Timothy—dry toast—no hot meat—that cold quail pie will do. The double wagon, with Lucifer and Pluto, at six

precisely—we shall want Dick to bring the nags home, and you to go with us. Some luncheon in the game-bag—the flasks all filled. I will shoot over Sancho and Jem Crow and Shot to-morrow—do you understand?"

" Ay, ay, sur !" answered Tim, and exit.

" And now, Fred, this is your bed-room—all's right, I fancy—you shall be called at five to-morrow, and, please the pigs, I'll let you know, and that before sunset, that a day's tramping in the swamps of Warwick is quite another thing from our friend Lee's ' Day in the Woods.' "

CHAPTER II.

COCK SHOOTING.

THE skies were yet quite dark, when Frederic Heneage was aroused from the deep slumber into which, wearied with his long drive of the previous day, he had fallen the very moment his head touched the pillow, by the entrance of Tim, bearing a mug of hot water and a lighted candle.

"Please to get oop, sur"—he exclaimed, as he opened the door, "t' clock's stricken faive, an' Measter's amait dressed enoo."

"All right, Tim," answered Heneage, thrusting his arms into the sleeves of a rich brocaded dressing gown, and jumping out of bed without a moment's hesitation.

"I will be with him, in a quarter of an hour : what sort of morning is it?"

"A varry naice un," replied Tim. "T' frost's

giving laike a little noo, and when t' soon 's oop,
it will be warm and pleasant."

No more words passed, Heneage proceeding to shave and make his ablutions with all an Englishman's fastidious nicety in such matters, and Timothy retiring, on hospitable cares intent. Within the quarter of an hour, however, for which he had stipulated, Heneage made his appearance in the breakfast parlour, fully equipped in shooting jacket, fustian trousers, and stout ankle shoes, and found the table covered and Harry waiting for him, the least in the world impatiently.

"Well, Fred," he cried, as his friend came in; "we have no time to lose, breakfast is ready. So sit down, and rememher that you have got a hard day's work before you. But what the deuce is this?—Have you, too, of all men, got into the Frenchified style of dandy trousers for shooting in, instead of honest old corduroys and boots or leggins? Well, you will suffer for it, I can tell you, before the day's out—we shall be knee-deep twenty times in mud and water, before noon, and it has frozen sharp enough, I promise you, to make the water as cold almost as ice—you had

better take off those confounded things, and put on a pair of my knee-breeches and long boots—Tim will get you them in a minute.”

“ Oh! no—never mind, Harry—I shall do very well—there is no milk sop about me !”

“ Nor about me, I rather fancy; and yet last autumn I got such a fit of bronchitis after shooting a week with the Commodore at Vernon in ice-water, with ankle boots and leather leggins, that I had a near squeak for my life; and made up my mind never to shoot again in autumn without long boots, and them as nearly waterproof as good workmanship and Hawker’s dressing will make them. But you must do as you will.”

“ I will try these to-day,” replied Heneage; “ nobody dreams of shooting now-a-days in England except in trousers. It is too deuced troublesome buttoning boots and leggins.”

“ Quite true, Fred—it is troublesome; and in an English turnip field or stubble—say even in a preserved wood with trimly cut rides to walk in dryshod, with no thorns or briars to annoy you, trousers are just as good. On the moors they are better, for they are loose, and confine the muscles somewhat less, though for that matter well made

breeches do not bind at all. But you will soon find here, between the wet and boggy nature of the woodlands, and the infernal thorns and cat-briers which render the brakes almost impenetrable, that some more substantial protection for the shins is needed, than a mere fustian trouser leg, even if you laugh at wet feet; which by the way you cannot long do in America with impunity."

"We will see, Harry, we will see. In the meantime, give me another cup of the Bohea, and a corner of that pie—what is it made of?—it looks very good."

"It *is* very good—it is, I think, the best pie in the world, a fat rump-steak at the bottom, a dozen hen quails, a score of hard-boiled eggs, and a handful of red pepper pods. It is an invention jointly claimed by myself and Frank Forester. The pepper pods were his idea—and a great improvement they are too. But halloa! there comes Dick with the drag, and the dogs. He is before his time a few minutes—Put the blankets on them, Dick," he added, opening the window and speaking to the lad, "and drive them round the ring; we will be ready in five or ten minutes. Ring

the bell, Heneage, there's a good fellow ; I want to speak to Timothy."

A moment had not passed before Timothy made his appearance, no longer rigged in his neat plain livery coat, but wearing a long round-jacket of black velveteen, with stout breeches and leggins of Yorkshire cord, and a large game-bag slung across his shoulders.

" Tim," said his master, " go and tell Mrs. Deighton, that we will dine at six o'clock, and ask her what she means to feed us on."

" I can tell that without axing t' cook," responded Tim. " She's boon to have venison soup, and t' big perch Tom Draw sent us oop, barbacued, and a roast leg of mutton, and boiled partridges."

" *Boiled* partridges!" Heneage interrupted him. *Boiled!* Good Lord! is it possible that you have turned heathen, Harry? or has Tim taken 'his morning' a thought too strong?"

" Neither, Fred, neither! They are the best things you ever tasted, larded and boiled with celery sauce."

" Partridges?" exclaimed Heneage, " partridges?"

"Yes, partridges; that is, partridges as they call them here, but in reality, as I told you last night, *ruffed grouse*."

"Worse and worse, by heavens! Boiled grouse. Hear it not, shade of Colonel Thornton! Hear it not, Captain Ross, or my Lord Kennedy!—you who did whilom admit this recreant to your society—hear not the excess of his villany. By all the gods! Boiled Grouse!"

"We will not discuss them now, Fred; but if you do not discuss them, and that too with much gusto, when we come in at six o'clock, I will plead guilty to any possible enormity! Well, what else, Timothy?"

"Roast woodcock, cheese, caviare, and red herrings."

"Bravo, Mrs. Deighton!" replied Harry; "and what have *you* got to take along with us for luncheon?"

"Ay'se gotten t' cauld toong 'at was maade ready 't last naight, and was na coot, and bre-ad and booter, and 't twa quart wicker bottle full o' t' breawn sherry."

"Well; and the guns are in the wagon, are they? and lots of powder and shot, caps and cards?"

“ Ay, ay, sur.”

“ Well then, bring in our box-coats, and my buckskin mittens, and we'll be off at once.”

In a minute or two they were snugly muffled up, both of them, Fred Heneage in a pilot jacket and boat cloak, and Harry in a huge box-coat with a dozen capes; for the morning was still sharp and cold, although the first rays of the sun were beginning to steal up the sky from behind the eastern mountain, and Archer well knew that to begin shooting with cold hands and a shivering body was just the way to ensure a bad day's sport.

They went out into the little hall, and there Harry mounted a head-piece made of felt sitting close to the scull, with a strong projecting peak not much unlike an English huntsman's velvet cap; and as he saw Heneage putting on a neat London built castor, he cried out—

“ No, no, Fred, that will never do! if you will not allow me to clothe your nether man, you must at least permit me to *tile* you. Why, bless your heart, that natty *Jupp* of yours would be knocked out of all manner of shape, into a cocked hat, as they say here, in five minutes, besides that you

could not make your way through the first dingle in it. Here, Tim, fetch my other cap hither! it hangs at the wardrobe end, next the window. There," he continued, as Timothy made his appearance with a rough weather-beaten scull-cap; "Put that on, my boy, and the deuce take the beauty of it."

"Well, if I must, I must," answered Fred, eyeing it somewhat suspiciously; "but it's a queer go."

"Never mind, never mind. Jump up, in front with me," answered Harry, who had already taken the reins in his hand, and was standing beside the fore wheel of his trim shooting wagon.

That was the very model of a dog-cart, embodying all the excellences and conveniences of an English sporting drag, with the combined strength and lightness of the Jersey wagon. In front it had the high dash board, the raised seat, sufficiently raised to drive four horses from it handily, and the handsome lamps of a mail-phæton, while behind it had a long close box body, with a seat for the servants at the back, large enough to contain four dogs and baggage for a month's journey. The whole was bedecked with fine bear-skins lined

with Brussels carpeting, and made at the same time as warm and as handsome as a Russian sledge. Under these skins the dogs were stowed already, and Dick had taken his seat behind, while Timothy stood to the near horse's head, until the gentlemen were in their places, then touching his hat with a gnostical "All right," he jumped into his place, and, Harry uttering a low whistle, the gay nags started off at a light trot, and soon brought them to the high road.

"You have a sweet pair of cobs, here, Harry," said Heneage; "are they fast? That black horse on the nigh side has the very cleverest action I ever saw."

"What, Pluto?—no cleverer than Lucifer's, I think—they step exactly together. No, they are not fast; I don't care about fast horses; it is no fun to me to drive a brute that hauls your arms out of the sockets at the rate of a mile in two minutes and a few seconds, more or less."

"But I don't know what you mean," answered Fred; "we are going along at a spanking pace now—twelve miles an hour at least—don't you call that fast?"

"Not here, Fred; not here. Nothing is counted

fast that cannot go a mile within three minutes. It is to extreme speed in *trotting*, far more than to endurance or maintenance of pace, that the attention of American trainers has been directed; which is the more remarkable, that in their *racing*, bottom is the point particularly aimed at, somewhat to the sacrifice of speed. The great ambition of young men about town is to possess a pair of horses, or a single nag, that can give the go-by to every thing on the avenues, and go at a rate which it would bother a thorough-bred to beat on his gallop, for a mile or two. For a long journey, these crack trotters are apt to be little worth—though there are, of course, brilliant exceptions—and almost invariably they are cross made and ungainly; bearing upon their bits, and keeping a dead pull, that is really painful to the driver. My team here, for I have four of them—the chestnut you sat behind yesterday, and his match, are my leaders—is what would be thought extraordinary at home, for I can drive it handily twelve miles within the hour, or twenty-four in two, for that matter! without one of the four breaking his trot, and that without the whip; yet no one in this country thinks anything about them, except

to wonder why ‘that Mister Archer, who spends such a heap of money on his horses, shouldn’t have one raal trotter out of the hull lot.’ Some such comments as these are made on my stud every day, by the farmers.—But look here, what do you think of this for cock-ground?” and, as he spoke, he pulled up at a little wooden bridge which crossed a small brook, a nameless tributary of the Wawayanda creek, which lay about half-a-mile to the right at the farther side of the broad valley.

To the left of the bridge looking up the brook, there was a long stripe of low thick covert, near half-a-mile in length, with a clump of dark pines at the farther end, and about an acre of dry thorny brake around them. To the right-hand, following the downward course of the little stream as it swept off to join the river, was a continuous range of tall and moderately open woodlands, with a wide tract of boggy meadows interposed between them and the road, the fields interspersed with thickets of thorn, willow, and cedar bushes, and cut up by wide wet drains, lined with rows of sallows.

“What do you think of that for cock-ground?”

he repeated, waving his hand in a semicircle round him ; “ there are miles upon miles, in that direction, of ground almost unexplored ; and, I cannot doubt it, almost as good as that on which I am taking you to-day. Come, jump out, jump out ; there we commence operations.”

Timothy, meantime, had pulled out the guns in their woollen cases, handed them with their appurtenances to their owners, and was busily employed slinging his game-bags, and a couple of supernumerary shot-belts across his sturdy shoulders, and hunting up his trusty blackthorn cudgel among the buffalo robes, which filled the box of the carriage.

“ Mun Ay tak t’ looncheon alang, Measter Archer ? ” he inquired ; “ or will t’ dram bottles be enough, ’till we coom back to t’ wagon ? ”

“ Oh, the dram bottles certainly ; where’s mine ? What have you put in it ? Ferintosh, eh ? Well, that’s right ; and Mister Heneage has got—”

“ Pineapple rum, Harry. Timothy and I had a private confabulation on the subject, and I made, as I supposed you wished, my own selection.”

“ Of course, of course, Fred ; now, Dick, you know where Aunt Nelly lives—by the third bridge

down this brook? Very well. Wait for us there; they will let you put the horses up in the stable; you have brought oats along? Exactly! feed them—but leave the wagon under the big oak tree there by the brook side; for I don't wish to go into the house;—do you understand me?"

"Yes, sir," replied the lad, with a grin of intelligence.

"Away with you, then!" said Archer, "and drive steadily; for they are rather fresh this morning."

"And, Dick, lad," added Timothy, "after thou'st gotten doone sorting t' horses, build up a spoonk o' fire by t' ro-ad saide; and get t' cloth spread, and t' looncheon ready i' good stayle, and maind 'at them Goshen chaps doosn't eat it oop; as they did t' last taime i' soommer cock-shooting!"

"No;—did they—did they, Harry? By George, that is too good!"

"You would not have thought it so very good, I fancy, if you had been as thirsty as we were, and had found the cool champagne all gone. But never mind that now, for we must go to work. We will cross the fence here, and walk up to the far end of the brake, and drive it down. We

shall kill twenty birds here, I have no doubt. Come in to heel, good dogs!"

And, at his words, the three staunch and well-broke setters came to his heel, and followed with grave composure.

"Heneage," said Harry, "I want you to notice and make friends with Jem Crow, the black dog there, for I mean him to hunt with you to-day. I will order him over to you, as soon as we get into covert, and if you will keep a good look to him for the first half-hour, and rate him, if he tries to steal away, he will work for you very well. Now we will go in—be ready, for there will be a cock jumping up in a moment. It is cruelly thick for the first few yards, but after that it gets opener."

As he spoke they turned into the thicket, which was indeed at first exceedingly thick-set with alder bushes, and very rotten and unstable under foot; but in a moment they were through this, and stood on the opener and firmer ground within.

"Now, Fred," said Harry, "go on till you come to a straight-cut ditch; jump over it, and keep close down its farther shore. This place is so narrow here, that we can drive it all down at

once ; but as it gets wider I will bear over toward you, and you shall take the outer edge, and we will come round the meadow side afterward."

"Ay, ay, Harry !" and he went on his way briskly ; but ere he had gone ten paces, the three dogs all lying at a charge by Archer's feet, a woodcock sprung up out of a tuft of winter-green, literally under his feet, and flew very fast with its sharp whistle in a straight line before him, rising up into the tree tops. Heneage was taken by surprise, and startled, for the moment ; but he recovered before the bird had flown ten yards, covered him handsomely, and knocked him over completely riddled with the shot. Not one of the dogs stirred.

"Load your gun quick ; that was done very neatly, Fred ; call the black dog as soon as you are ready, and he will go to you, and retrieve the bird. Look at it, and you will see that I told you the truth ; he is at least one-third smaller than our English bird, and red-breasted."

"Yes, by the Lord ! and he began to sing as he got up," replied Fred. "You did not tell me that Yankee woodcocks were in the habit of whistling

before ! Ready now ! Here, Jem ! Jem ! seek dead, good dog."

The fine black setter raised himself partially up on his fore legs, and lifted his intelligent and speaking eyes to his master, as if to inquire, whether this stranger's order was to be heeded ; and then, as Harry waved his hand with the words, "To him, Jem ; go to him !" he dashed away, through the brushwood, and in a minute was standing, in a beautiful position, on the dead bird.

" Is he at point, Fred ? "

" Yes ! "

" Tell him to ' Fetch,' then."

" But suppose it is a fresh bird ? "

" If it is, he will hold his point ; the devil could not make him flush one, after he has stood it ! Bid him ' Fetch,'—you are losing time."

Exhorted thus, Fred Heneage did as he was bid ; and the black dog moved onward warily, snuffing the tainted herbage, and in a moment picked up the bird, and began mouthing it very gently, as he set off to carry it to Archer.

" Here, Jem ! fetch it here, Jem !" cried Heneage ; but the dog seemed marvellously disinclined to surrender his prize to any one but his

proper owner; nor would he do so till Harry rated him pretty sharply; after which he resigned himself, appearing to understand perfectly what he was required to do; and all the rest of the day he hunted very steadily before Heneage, though keeping an eye all the time to the movements of the other dogs, and backing them as often as they pointed.

“ Hold up; now hold up, lads!—whe-e-e-ew!” And, with a shrill and tremulous whistle, Archer waved the brace of red Irish setters, Sancho and Shot, which were still lying at his feet, to the right hand and left. Away they darted, with the speed of light, in different directions, crashing and rattling through the dense brushwood; but, at the first sharp single whistle of their master, they turned instantly, and crossed each other, breaking their ground and beating at regular angles with beautiful precision. They had not beat thus far, before, seeing Sancho slacken his gallop into a long steady trot, and raise his head high, snuffing the air; and feathering his stern eagerly, Harry cried out—

“ Look to! look to, Fred! there are birds here.”

The next moment, Shot, who appeared to understand the meaning of his companion’s motions

as readily as his master did, and who was drawing cautiously up toward him, turned his head around quite suddenly, and stood as stiff as a marble statue upon a bird, which he had nearly passed. Almost at the same instant Sancho came to a dead point, upon the bird which he had winded ; both standing within a circumference of ten paces, though on two several woodcocks.

"Come up, come up, Fred!" halload Archer, poising his gun and holding his thumb on the cock of the right-hand barrel, and his finger on the trigger ;—"come up, quick; here are a couple of cock. Toho, Shot—steady, sir—toho! Do you hear, Fred?"

"Yes, yes ! but Jem Crow is making game here!"

"Never mind that, unless he is at point; whistle him off and come this way."

"Ay, ay!"

And, in a moment, he leaped the narrow drain, and came forward quickly, the black dog cantering along behind him, until he saw the others at their point. There for a moment he backed them stiff; and then, as Heneage advanced, he crawled along upon his belly, as warily as if he was tread-

ing upon eggs, till he was now within six feet of Sancho, when snuffing the hot scent of the game, he too stood firm and steady—the three dogs now forming nearly the points of an equilateral triangle—each in full view of the other, and not exhibiting the slightest proof of jealousy or over eagerness.

"Steady now, Fred," said Archer, coolly; "these birds will rise, it is ten to one, very awkwardly, for they are in the very middle of the dogs. Stand where you are, and I will flush them. Never mind me, I want you to get the shots to-day."

And he stepped up toward Shot, who was rather the nearest of the three to himself, the others standing nigher to Heneage, in such a direction as to drive the bird if possible out toward his friend. But he had judged rightly, for the bird lay extremely hard, being in fact directly under the dog's nose, and seeing him, so that he was in fact afraid to rise.

When Harry was, however, on the point of treading upon him, he flirted up almost in his face, and flew off a dozen yards toward Heneage, when he twisted off short to the left again, and

made a dozen quick zigzags among the close saplings, very much in the manner of the English *tack snipe*, beating round toward Archer's rear.

Heneage fired his first barrel at him just as he turned, the first time, and missed him clean, the whole of his charge splintering the bushes two feet wide of the bird, and nearly a foot above him as he turned. He was endeavouring to follow and cover him for a second shot, when the other bird, flushed by the report, rose before Sancho, giving him what, had he not been embarrassed between the two, would have been a very fair shot; catching sight of it suddenly, he altered his aim, and discharged his remaining barrel.

Meantime Archer, perceiving that he had quitted the first bird, which had by this time got a good way off, and was pitching high and wild toward the end of the wood, by which they had entered, raised his gun very coolly. The cock was diving, at the moment he levelled his piece, through an exceedingly thick growth of young saplings which had been laid by the snow, and would have almost turned his shot had he then fired. But his quick eye at once detected an opening in the brake a few yards in advance,

which, although not above six feet in breadth, the bird must cross in a moment.

As his wing glanced against the sky the trigger was drawn, the gun flashed, a cloud of feathers streaming down wind, and the bird still impelled forward, though quite dead, by the rapidity of his past flight, told how correct had been the accurate although instinctive aim of the keen sportsman.

But all this Archer saw not, for certain, as he drew the trigger, that his bird was killed, he turned short round, cocking his second barrel as he did so, to look after the other cock, at which Heneage had emptied his gun.

As he expected he was still on the wing, and nearly forty yards off in the tree tops, but as quick as light he fired a snap shot, and turned him likewise over dead as a herring.

"I was sure you would miss that bird, Fred," he said almost simultaneously with the report of his gun. "It was ten to one against you when you tried to change your aim. I believe I have seen a hundred birds missed in precisely the same manner. The first was not your fault, for he dodged just as you pulled upon him."

“Did *you* kill him?”

“Yes!”

“Where is he, Harry? he must be a long way off.”

“I do not know exactly, for I did not see him fall, I turned so quickly to mark this fellow.”

“How do you know you killed him then?”

“How do I know?—a pretty question, faith!—why, I know that he was in range, I saw him fairly, and *I know* I killed him. I can tell you no more. Wherever I can *see* a bird, I can always tell you whether I have killed him, or if I have missed him, *how* I did so, and generally *why*. Where you shoot with the eye of faith, not seeing but believing, it is a different matter! Now I am ready, Heneage! You can bag that last bird for me as you go on, beat straight forward as you are doing, and try to mark whatever birds you do not kill. I will go and find that fellow, and then overtake you.”

He whistled his dogs after him as he ceased speaking, and walked away rapidly in the direction of his first bird, but long before he had got half way to the spot where it had fallen, he heard the full round reports of his friend’s Purday,

both barrels fired in quick succession, the next moment the warning shout of "Mark, mark cock! mark, Harry!" reached his ear; he turned short about, and as he did so, he just caught a glimpse of the bird in question darting over his head, and not ten feet above it. With the speed of thought he again wheeled round, and again only in time to catch one glimpse of his wing, as he alighted in a little tuft of fern within fifteen paces. Both dogs had seen him, and both now stood firm. Two steps and the cock got up quite silently, and was stealing off down wind, when the whole charge overtook him, and keeled him over on the margin of the boggy streamlet. He was bagged in a moment, but more than a quarter of an hour was consumed ere he could find the first bird, and when he did at last retrieve him, it was almost by accident, for he had been caught in the forked branches of a dogwood bush as he fell; and it was only the peculiar manner in which Sancho snuffed the air, and reared up once or twice on his hind-legs, that directed his master's attention to the place where his bird hung suspended felon-like by the neck in middle air.

Meantime, three single shots and two double

from the right-hand side of the covert, assured him that Heneage had found game, whether he could deal with it or no, and Harry stepped out joyously to overtake him; but ere he did so, two more shots resounded, and half a minute after each a woodcock crossed him to the left; the first was in fair distance, and he bagged him; the second was quite out of range, and him he marked down by the meadow edge. When he came up Heneage was standing in a willow brake up to his knees in mud, perspiring profusely, with his face and hands very much scratched and torn, and swearing like a trooper.

"What is the matter, Fred? what the deuce ails you?"

The answer was another violent outbreak of swearing. "Who the devil," he said, "ever could shoot in such a cursed hole as this? the deuce a feather can I touch!"

"How many have you killed?"

"None!"

"None?" exclaimed Harry, "that *is* bad; why you must have fired, let me see, three double and five single shots since I left you—have you really killed none at all?"

"None to speak of," replied Heneage, a little sulkily; "only four birds out of eleven shots!"

"Where are the others, those that you missed?"

"I don't know; they went off there away to the left-hand."

"I can find them then," said Archer; "and now, never fear, you shall get birds enough. Come back here, there is a fine fresh spring under this oak; take a good horn of rum and water, and make it pretty stiff, you had better; and wash your hands and face, and rest till you get your breath. It is not so bad, after all; we have got eight birds in a little over half-an-hour, and we shall get all the rest."

The drinks were duly received and imbibed; and Fred recovered his breath and his temper; and the friends were soon afoot again, and ready to proceed.

"Bear out now to the left, till you are quite clear of the brake and in the open meadow, Fred," Harry cried to him; "walk a few yards ahead of me, and look out *you* for all that cross you! I will not fire at any but those which go inward. Are you outside yet?"

"Ay, ay, Harry."

"Then move on! Toho! here is a dead point. By the big cedar, Fred; I will flush him to you. Toho! Shot, mark—mark! there he goes!"

He crossed out instantly as he rose, and flew along the wood edge right before Heneage's face, and he dropped him cleverly; within ten yards another cock was sprung, driven into the open, and bagged by Fred in the same manner. Then Archer killed a clever double shot in the brake as they flew inward, and, after he had gathered those, missed one in a very boggy thicket, sinking over his knees just as he pulled the trigger, and shooting six feet over him; but the bird pitched outward, and Fred Heneage cut him down a quick snap shot, just as he was turning in again. "Wiped my eye cleverly, Fred," said Harry; "but I believe you will have to come and give me a hand; for I am bogged here hard and fast, and have my doubts if I can get out by myself. Here it goes! yes, I can—that will do. By George! here's another point; look to—mark, mark, a couple!"

This time Fred killed a double shot, and Harry a moment after a single bird, which flew like the

others outward; but Heneage was loading, and Harry knew it.

By this time they had reached the point of the swamp; and accordingly they turned back, up the opposite side of the streamlet, picking up at every few yards the scattered birds which they had driven across, and some which had been feeding on the fresh ground.

When they were about half-way up the covert, Harry, who was still on the outside, called out to him—"Look *to* now, all the three dogs are drawing; I fancy it must be a bevy of quail running—*toho!*—they are all stiff now! Fred, where are you?"

"Here!" and as he spoke a prodigious rushing followed. The dogs were pointing at a thick stripe of tussocky bog grass, and out of that, with a vast rush and flutter, a fine cock ruffed grouse rose, and flew across the trees to the inside of the covert. Harry of course fired at him, for he was his shot; but Fred, who was fluttered by the row he made, fired unluckily at the same moment. The bird fell dead enough, and so far all was well; and the next moment a second fluttered out, and crossed the open meadow, and

that Fred likewise dropped; but a third and fourth followed directly after the second, while Fred was loading, and Harry unable to get a shot at them for the thicket. Just as the latter had dropped his butt to load, a fifth bird rose; which went down to his rapidly recovered shot, and at the report a sixth and seventh went off rapidly, Archer covering them as they did so with his empty gun.

“There!” he said, as the last birds got off; “in all the years that I have shot, I never saw ruffed grouse lie like that before; we have got three, but we ought to have had four, if you, Master Fred, had not fired at my bird!”

“*Confiteor* — I plead guilty,” answered Heneage; “but shall we not follow them?”

“No, it were of no use; they fly like devils, and take to the tree for the most part, so that you cannot find them. We will go on to the end—we shall find three or four more cock yet.”

And they did go on, and flushed five; whereof they killed two, Heneage missing a third, and the others getting up wild and going off without being shot at.

“We shall get them as we go down again,”

said Harry, "and then we will have some luncheon."

Two of these they got up and bagged; but the third they could not find, though they beat for him far and near; and they had given him up, and were already out of the brake, and half-way across the meadow toward the oak tree, under the shade of which they could see a bright fire blazing, and the table-cloth spread on the mossy turf, when Timothy, who had left them some time before, hailed them from the road-side.

"Look to yon boonch o' brackens there anenst you—that last cock lit in 'em."

And almost as he spoke, with a quick flip-flap, the bird rose, and flew directly over Archer's head back to the alder gulley. Heneage fired at it when it was not ten yards from the muzzle of his gun; but down it came, over and over, till it was within two feet of the ground; then, strange to say, it rallied and flapped heavily along, both the friends watching it, as if it was on the point of falling every moment, till it was thirty yards off at the least, then gathering strength suddenly, it whirled up over the tree tops and away—when Harry pitched up his gun and riddled it completely.

"Fetch him, good dog Shot!" exclaimed Harry.
"But hang me if I understand that—but we shall
see directly."

The dog brought in the bird, and lo! the truth was apparent in a moment. Heneage's shot, going like a ball, had cut the bill clear off close to the head of the bird, without ruffling a feather else. And but for Harry's shot he would have got off to die by inches of starvation.

"I am glad I killed him, poor devil," said Archer. "Well, we have done pretty well. That is twenty-seven woodcock and three ruffed grouse we have bagged, and it is scarce eleven o'clock yet; but we breakfasted so early that I for one am hungry. So now for the cold tongue, and the sherris sack!"

"I am all for that too. What shall we do after luncheon?"

"Bag twenty or twenty-five more cock, and find five or six bevies of quail. How many of them we shall kill depends almost entirely on circumstances. Take the caps off your gun and lay it down—now for the cold tongue and Master Timothy."

CHAPTER III.

A NEW APPEARANCE OF AN OLD FRIEND, " LIKE
A BULL-DOG."

THERE was a green nook by the road-side, close to the wooden bridge over the small brooklet down which Archer and his friend had been shooting. In this nook, hard by the fence, grew a huge oak tree, overshadowing the better part of an acre of ground, with a crystal spring bubbling up from among its tortuous roots, and welling away silently through the greener grass which bordered its course, and falling into the rivulet just where it rippled out from the arch of the rustic bridge.

Under this canopy of the oak, not a leaf of which had yet changed its hue under the influence of the early frosts, a snow-white cloth was spread upon the grass, its four corners carefully secured to the ground by the weight of as many

smooth gray pebbles, collected from the bed of the little stream. Upon this cloth were displayed in tempting array, a cold buffalo tongue, a loaf of fresh home-made bread, a dozen pats of golden hued Orange county butter in a stone cooler, and a plate of crisp hot anchovy toast. A set of travelling castors, a couple of silver plates, with knives, silver forks, clean napkins, and two capacious wine glasses, completed the array ; a small canteen of Russia leather, from which this neat service had been drawn, stood open by the spring, in the bright basin of which a bottle of pale sherry was set to cool ; and a bright fire of dry hickory wood was glancing on the green at the other side of the tree.

"Ay'se varry glad thou'st coom, sur," exclaimed Timothy, as his master and Heneage approached, and set down their guns, having first duly removed the caps, against the oak tree. "Ay was amaist afeard 'at you were gane to be ahint taime ! For t' anchovy toast is joost ready, and 't wad ha' been spoiled cle-an, an you'd tarried a bit langer."

"It would have been your own fault, if it had, Tim, for you did not tell me you were a going to

make any ; but since you have, and we are all in time, so much the better," said his master—"I could not think why the deuce you had lighted a fire."

"Whay Ay thoot Ay'd joost make t' dogs a soop o' gruel, laike. Sae Ay borrowed t' auld airn pot frae Aunt Nelly, and boiled twa hanfulls o' t' oat'en meal wi' a little salt for 'em. And then Ay bethoot me o' t' anchovies. Measter Heneage laiked 'em weel, Ay remember, lang syne."

"So I did, Tim," said Heneage, laughing, "and so I do now, Tim. How the deuce though come you to remember that?"

"What ails me 'at Ay suld forget 't? Measter Archer never forgets ought, not he."

"And so you think that you are bound to be like master, like man, in all things—eh?"

"Nay, nay ! Ay'se not sooch a fule as that, by a varry deal, Measter Heneage. But coom, coom, gentlemen, t' toast is getting cauld, when all's said and de-an."

Exhort ed thus, they wasted no more time; and in truth, in those short winter days time was a precious commodity; and accordingly as they sat down, Harry Archer pulled out his gold stop watch, and looking at it, said—

"Just eleven, Fred, by Jove! I can allow you only a short half-hour. For we have nearly four miles more to go, and our best ground to beat yet."

"I am content, Harry," answered Heneage, sedulously masticating a slice of the crisp toast. "Devilish good anchovy this!—a glass of sherry, if you please, Tim."

"Well, Master Fred," said Harry, sipping his glass of the pale high flavoured dry wine, "what have you got to say for yourself now, anent your absurdities of last night? You have killed two birds of our Yankee game already. Or three kinds, if you please, in two birds. Look at this fellow," he continued, pulling out the ruffed grouse from his pocket. "This is the partridge of New York and New England; the pheasant of New Jersey, and the South. Do you think he looks very much like an English pheasant, with his green neck, flame-coloured breast, and long barred tail."

"Not very like a whale! Harry," answered Fred, trying to laugh, but bothered a little notwithstanding.

"Quite as much like a whale, as like a pheasant. Look at his legs feathered to the ankle, and this long tippet, whence he derives his

name. In the breeding season he sets this up like a ruff, and spreads his tail like a turkey-cock, and makes a drumming noise that you can hear half-a-mile off, and—but I suppose you don't believe that."

"Oh! yes I do," said Heneage, quickly. "Oh, dear yes!"

"And do you believe that woodcock here—"

"Yes, yes! Good Heaven! yes, I believe everything! everything that you like to say!"

"You have become very credulous all of a sudden," said Harry, looking at him keenly.

"Of course I have. Do not I know that if I shall presume to doubt any yarn, the most fearful that it may please you to concoct, I shall be seized and dragged before the world like a bull-dog."

"Like a what?" exclaimed Harry.

"G—d! I wad na laike to seize a bull-dog, let alone dragging him afore t' warld!" said Timothy, who was looking on, and drinking with eager ears every word that fell from their lips.

"Like a bull-dog, to be sure, *à la* Hargreaves!" replied Fred, delighted to change the subject, in the first place, and not ill pleased, in the second, to put Archer in the hole for a minute.

"Hargreaves!" said Harry, still at fault—"I don't take in the least."

"Is it possible that you have not heard of the Weatherbit and Old England controversy at the last Derby?"

"Oh! yes of course; what was I thinking about?" Harry answered; "but I don't recollect anything about a bull-dog," he added, after a moment's reflection.

"The devil you don't!" shouted Fred. "How any man that read it, could possibly forget it, I cannot conceive. I heard it, and it very nearly killed me. My sides were sore with laughing six weeks afterward."

"But what was it? Good Lord! tell me.—D—n you, now, don't begin laughing;" he continued, as Heneage flung himself back on the grass in convulsions.

"Why hang it! how strange that you don't remember!" replied Fred, as soon as he could recover himself. "I tell you I saw Hargreaves leap up on the chair, in Tattersall's, immediately that Gulley left it, and exclaim, pale with rage, and almost stuttering with fury, that he thought it exceedingly hard 'he should be seized and

dragged before the world like a bull-dog, by Mr. Gulley.'"

"Measter Goolley," exclaimed Tim, "Ay'se a warrant him, he's t' varry man to seize a bull-dog; if 't's to be de-an at all—or any oother varmint. I kenned Measter Goolley brawly; Ay seed him faight Gregson, yance. It's lang syne; but he did 't laike—"

"Like a bull-dog, of course;" interrupted Heneage. "But to resume; at every second sentence, he introduced 'seized like a bull-dog!' 'dragged in like a bull-dog!' till at last, I could stand it no longer, but shouted, 'Go it! go it, like a bull-dog!'—I wish you could have heard the roar; grave as the subject was, it lasted full five minutes; since that time, I do every thing 'like a bull-dog.' "

"Excellent! excellent! Fred," cried Archer, laughing furiously. "I shall do everything 'like a bull-dog,' too. The word must be introduced and rendered current. But come, come, we must lose no more time. Take another glass of sherry, and let us be off."

But they were not destined to get under way, quite so quickly, for just as they were about to

rise from their seats, the hard gallop of a horse was heard, coming across the grass field behind them, and before they had time to turn their heads, a superb chestnut thoroughbred, with a bang tail, came flying over the fence not ten yards distant from their table-cloth, with a loud and cheery whoop of its rider.

“ That must be Frank or the devil ! ” exclaimed Harry, as he looked up from the glass which he was filling—“ nobody else would come tearing over fences in that fashion—”

“ Like a bull-dog ” — interrupted Fred — “ But it is he, sure enough. How are you, old fellow ? ”

“ And what the deuce brought you here today ? We did not look for you before Friday at the earliest.”

“ Why, look you here, old fellow,” answered Forester ; “ when I found that Master Fred had come up to give the birds a turn, which you have promised all the season to save for me, I thought that, if I did not come and look after them myself, I should be minus at the end of the week. So I packed up my trunk, and sent it by the Erie railroad. Saddled Bright Selim,

and went on board the Highlander with him, last night at five o'clock—slept at Newburgh, and galloped over hither with my gun slung upon my shoulder, in shooting toggery as you see me. I only stopped to ask Tom Draw to dine with you to-day—which I found you had ordered already—took my bitters with him, would not stay for breakfast, and am as hungry as—”

“A bull-dog!” interrupted Heneage again, whereat Timothy, who thought the repetition very funny, burst into a furious laugh.

“I don’t see the fun of everything being like a bull-dog!”

“Everything *is* like a bull-dog, Frank,”—said Harry.

“Is it? I am agreeable”—said Forester, who had seated himself by the table-cloth, which the others had deserted, and had already finished four large slices of tongue, two pounds of bread, and half-a-pint of sherry—“some more tongue, Timothy, and another glass of wine—very agreeable I am—and I dare say everything *is* like a bull-dog; but I can’t see why, for my part.”

“Specially Massa Hargreave! Frank,”—said

Archer, in a ludicrous nigger tone; and as soon as he spoke, Forester, who never missed anything absurd, remembered the point.

"Oh! yes, yes!" he replied—"was not that good? I suppose he will be called Bull-dog Hargreaves always now!"

"It is a great pity he had not lived in the time of Cromwell, that he might have been called at full length 'Seized-and-dragged-before-the-world-like-a-bull-dog Hargreaves.'—That is a thoroughly puritanic and very euphonious name," said Heneage.

"Oh, d—n Hargreaves! come along," said Harry, who was getting tired of this, and had taken up his gun.

"I'm perfectly agreeable," said Forester, emptying the last drop of sherry—"so, d—n Hargreaves!—Have you the least objection, Fred?"

"Not the slightest," answered Heneage, "except that I think he has d—d himself enough, in all conscience."

"Well; God bless Measter Goolley any ways," interposed Tim. "He desarves 't, joost for dragging oot t' bull-dog."

"Well said, Tim!" cried Harry Archer; "and

now, look here! pack up the traps, and direct Dick to the end of the crab-tree swamp. Hang all those birds up smoothly by the loops in the game-bag, put it into the wagon, and then follow us down the wood-side."

"Like a bull-dog!"

CHAPTER IV.

AFTER LUNCHEON.

"WELL, lads, and what have you done this morning, in the way of sport?" asked Forester, as they walked across the grass field, toward the covert.

"Twenty-two cock, and three ruffed grouse," answered Archer.

"By George! that is good work. How long have you been at it? How did Fred manage them?"

"Since eight o'clock," said Harry, "and devilish well, I assure you; to answer both your questions in a breath. Fred has shot better than ever I saw a new one, in this country."

"No, no, Harry," answered Heneage; "I tailored them very badly for a while."

"I cannot call that *tailoring*," said Archer; "Henry Toler himself could not kill *every* bird in

that brake ; and when that is said, it is as much as saying that an ordinarily good shot would do well to kill half—and, to tell you the truth, I did not expect to see you kill one in five ; seeing that this is your first day. But, after that bad bit, you shot like a workman. If you improve in proportion, you will give both Frank and myself a tug to beat you next season."

" Who is Henry Toler ?" asked Fred Heneage.

" The best shot in America !" said Frank Forester.

" And I think that means, in the world," added Harry quietly.

" The devil you do ?" asked Heneage. " Do you think the best shots here can beat our best shots at home ?"

" I think they can beat our best shots *here*, at American game and in American covert. The latter, as you know already, is harder than English covert ; and, if we find quail, as I think we shall, in the crab-tree swamp, you will make acquaintance with the hardest bird to kill, that flies on earth."

" Indeed ?"

" Yes, indeed !"

"Did you ever shoot with Henry Toler? can he beat you?"

"No. Yes."

"Did you ever see him shoot?"

"Once—pigeon from the trap. He *would* shoot No. 8 shot, which is three sizes too small, and they figged all his birds. In spite of that, he killed every bird. But they fell out of bounds, and he was beaten."

"Did you ever see him shoot game?"

"Never, Mr. Cross Examiner."

"How then do you know that he can beat you?"

"Because I have shot with half-a-dozen men, whom I can barely beat, or whom I cannot beat, and they all admit that Henry is their master, not their match."

"That is a reason!—Is he a good fellow?"

"Wait till you meet him, with your knees under my mahogany."

"I am answered."

"As how?" asked Frank Forester.

"Because Harry must be marvellously changed, if any but good fellows put their knees under his mahogany."

"He *is* marvellously changed, then. Don't you know that Lord George says the only reason he and I, and Tom Hutchinson, and Howe, and Bill Porter, like one another, is because we are such a set of d—d disagreeable beasts? But halloo! look at that—the dogs are all standing."

"By George! so they are. It is quail too! They are basking in the bog grass by the fence side, and will lie like stones."

The ground, which they had now gained, and which was Harry's chosen spot of spots, was a long range of boggy meadows, skirting the streamlet down which they had been shooting all the forenoon, intersected here and there with drains, and interspersed with lines of willows, thick thorny brakes all overrun with cat-briers, and clumps of evergreen cedar. The margin of the brook was lined on the hither side by a broad verge of thick alder coppice, and on the farther by a wide tract of wet and swampy woodland.

At a little distance from the stream the ground became firm and the soil dry, and here among the tussocks—the long grass of which, even in the heaviest storms, bears the snow up from the ground, forming long galleries under

which the quail live unharmed upon the seeds and berries that have fallen from above—bevies are in almost all seasons very abundant.

In this dry meadow land, where not a bush was to be seen within a hundred yards, the three dogs were standing as stiff as graven images.

The black dog, which had found the birds, was close upon them. His nose was pointed directly downward—his head cocked knowingly on one side—his full hazel eye, glaring with that peculiar expression, which tells how hotly the maddening scent is steaming up into the sensitive nostrils of the sagacious brute; his lip covered with slaver, so eager was his excitement; his hind-leg lifted, and his fine silky flag erect, and stiff as it were carved in iron.

The red setter Sancho, who stood next, and but a short space behind him, caught but a little of the hot steam which so wondrously excited his companion; to a sportsman's eye his attitude told everything.

He had approached as nearly as he dared, and with his whole body stretched out to the utmost, his snake-like neck elongated, his eye fixed, and his nostrils audibly snuffing up the

tainted air, he stood rigid as his mate, but not erect as he—for the deep soft fringe of his belly was within an inch or two of the withered herbage; his fore-leg was bent; and his red stern, with its snow-white tag stretched out nearly into one line with head, neck and body, which all seemed to be drawn forth to their utmost length, as if to near the game as much as possible without moving forward.

The third dog, the liver and white spotted set-
ter, was backing thirty yards at least from the
other two, having been quartering his ground
toward them, when they came on their point.

“ How do you know that they are quail, Harry? ”—inquired Heneage, as they stepped hastily for-
ward to the tuft of higher grass by which the
dogs were standing.

“ By the nature of the ground, Fred. It is too
dry to hold cock there;—and partly by the atti-
tude and action of the dogs. I can generally
guess very correctly what bird is going to get up,
where I can see the dogs fully. These little chaps
are close under Jem Crow’s nose, and Sancho has
a snuff of them too. They will lie, as I said be-
fore, like stones; and though they offer a very

easy shot in the open, they make such a flutter and hubbub as they get up, and they get up so closely, that I would bet ten to one you do not kill a double shot, be as cool as you may. It requires more practice to get used to them, than to any bird I know."

By this time they had come up to the very place where the dogs were standing; and Frank, at a gesture of Harry's, which he well understood, stepped forward a few paces to the right, in order, if possible, to head the birds off from the thorny covert on the banks of the rivulet.

"Now, Fred, look out," said Archer, "I will flush them"—and with the words he walked forward a little way, the black dog still keeping his point, and the red setter backing him, steady and true as steel.

So hard did the birds lie, that Archer was actually abreast of Jem Crow's nose, yet not a quail had risen.

Turning his head, he waved Heneage forward, and as he came up, uttered a low whistle.

Jem pricked his ears, and the silky hair bristled a little on his back, but he would not stir.

The red dog crawled up on his belly, until his

nose was parallel with that of his companion, and then stood immovable.

Meanwhile, the liver and white setter, Chance, stole up at a slow and guarded trot, as if he were treading upon eggs, until he also struck the scent, a little way behind the others, when he came to a full point also, though less resolutely than the two leaders.

“ Whe-ew ! Hold up, good lads ! Hold up !” —And thus exhorted, but most reluctantly and gingerly, all the three crawled about two paces forward—and again stood dead—and no words could induce them to advance another foot.

“ Is not that pretty, Heneage ?”—said Archer ; “ What can be steadier than that ? Now I will flush them”— and, suiting the action to the word, he stepped up briskly to the dog’s noses, trampling the long grass noisily down under his heavy boots—

Whir—whir-r-r-r-r ! Impeding one another, for an instant, crossing, and fluttering their wings with rapid and tumultuous haste, a large and well-grown bevy rose under his very feet ; and, as is not unfrequently the case, dividing into two squads, wheeled to the right and left, one to the

coppice across Forester's face, the other and larger division to the open meadow before Heneage.

Well warned as he was, and confident of his coolness, Heneage discharged his first barrel, missing handsomely before the farthest bird was ten paces from him ; and even Archer, cool old hand as he was, half raised his gun with a tremulous and uncertain hand to his shoulder. It was but a momentary impulse, however, and he looked steadily on until Heneage fired his second shot, killing the old cock of the bevy neatly at twenty yards—then choosing two birds in the act of crossing, he cocked his gun, as he raised it, pulling his trigger as it reached his shoulder ; and then, before the two birds, for the charge cut down both, had reached the ground, easing the butt a trifle, cocked and discharged his remaining barrel, knocking a third bird over at long distance.

Then, dropping the butt of his piece to the ground, he raised his hand to shade his eyes from the strong sunlight, and cried, "Mark, mark them, Fred ! they will all drop in the open meadow, where we can get every bird. There !" he continued, " three are down by that bunch of rushes — and—that is it, I have them !—the whole lot

on this side of the drain by the willow hedge. Now, Frank, what have you done?"

" Knocked down a brace, though one, I fear, is only wing-tipped—and marked five or six down into the thorns beside the blighted cedar."

" Hold a moment, then, till I have loaded. If I am not mistaken, there is another quail left here under Jem's nose—he seems to be pointing, though he is down to charge."

And, in fact, when you looked closely at the face of the sagacious brute, as he lay close, where, with his fellows, he had couched instant, without waiting orders, at the reports above his head, it was evident that his master had not miscalculated his intelligent meaning.

His eye was still set—his brow knotted into a rigid frown—his nostril wide distended.

" Are you ready, Fred?"—" Ready."

" Do not move. I will flush him to you. Do you kill him, I will not fire."

And leaning a little forward he brushed the long bog grass with the muzzle of his gun, when up jumped the bird, and crossing Heneage, was covered deliberately, and killed neatly.

" That will do—there are no more left here.

Now, Frank, whistle Jem Crow to you. Go to him, sirrah, go ! He will soon find your birds."

" I have got the first," answered Forester.— " Here, Jem ! Jem Crow—good dog!"—and with much less reluctance than he had shown before in joining Heneage, the handsome black setter trotted away obedient to a voice, which he knew second to his master's only.

Within a few moments Chance and Sancho had found the five birds, which had gone down to Heneage and Archer ; and just as they were bagging the last, they heard Forester cry, " Ha, dead —Jem, dead ! have a care !—Fetch him !"

" That is well," exclaimed Harry ; " seven birds for the first rise. We shall get the whole of this bevy. Upon my word, you are shooting very well, Heneage ! "

" Coming a little into it, old fellow. But which way now ? "

" I want you, Frank," shouted Archer—" a council of war ! Halloa ! what the deuce can be bringing Tim across the meadow at this rate ?—Gad ! how he twitches his short fins over the tussocks. I am afraid something is the matter ! What is it, Tim ? "

"Please, sur," responded Timothy, stopping short at the hail, "you did na tell me what's to be dean wi' Measter Forester' horse. T' boy canna maind him, and draive horses doon to t' crab-tree swamp at yance!"

"Lord bless me, I did forget. Well, you must ride him down the road, and leave him with the boy, and come in at the lower end to join us."

"Varry well, sur," responded Tim, and vanished, running back even faster than he came, unwilling to lose a minute's sport.

"Now, Frank," said Harry, "what is to be done? We ought, according to all rule, to hunt up those birds in the coppice first, for it is ten to one that we shall not find those which dropped in the open meadow, if we go to beat for them now."

"Not find them!" exclaimed Heneage in astonishment—"Not find them! why I can go within half a yard of the spot where they dropped."

"I don't care, if you can go within half an inch, you can't find them, if you go now."

"You need not stare, Fred," said Frank Forester; "this is one of his cranks—he believes, or affects to believe, that quail can retain their scent at pleasure."

"And do you?" asked Heneage, in some wonder.

"Not I, indeed! not one word of it."

"Well, never mind," said Archer, somewhat impatiently, "we have no time to talk about that now. On the other hand—the thorns are in our regular line of beat, and to come back here will lose half-an-hour. We have got to beat that corner at all events, for there will be from six to ten woodcock along those willows."

"Oh! let us go to them first," said Heneage; "what do you say, Frank?"

"In course, I say so. I will bet two to one we find the birds directly."

"In what, Frank?"

"In what you will!"

"Ponies?"

"If you please."

"Done!"

And without another word, throwing his dogs off to the right and left, waving his hand and encouraging them with his cheery whistle, away strode Harry, in the middle, toward the rushes into which the first three birds had been marked.

"There they lie, close to that tuft. Some

of them, not a yard asunder," said Heneage to Forester.

" Well, you will see the dogs point them directly."

But it was no such thing. For scarcely had he spoken, before Jew Crow and Sancho, meeting from opposite directions, quartered the very spot, both dogs passing within six feet of the rush clump, at a long gallop, their heads erect, whipping their flanks with their feathery sterns, but without evincing the slightest consciousness of game, and without moving a bird.

Archer looked round to them, with a smile and a wink.

" That is the very place," said Heneage.

" No, no!" said Forester, " it cannot be. Is it so, Archer?"

" Yes; to a yard! But I want to prove this fact to you. I will call in the dogs, and get them down to it, and make them hunt it out, inch by inch."

And he did so; and the three dogs worked the spot over and over, at his bidding, snuffing, as it seemed, every blade of grass, but moving nothing.

Ten minutes were perhaps spent thus, in vain;

and they moved forward to the drain, Harry saying—

“Now you shall see. Nine birds went down by this drain, and we shall not find them any more than the other three.”

Nor did they. But as they neared the drain, along which several willows grew rank and luxuriant, the thick grass broke off, unable to grow beneath the shade, into large isolated tussocks, and beyond them the soil was bare and very moist, with here and there a few water flags and large colts-foot leaves.

“We shall find cock here, lads!” said Harry—“Jump over the fence, Frank, or they will dodge us.”

They paused to give him time to do as he was directed, and, while they were standing still, in order to do so, the red dog, coming up rapidly, took a flying leap over one of the single tussocks, the very last one, and instantly came on a dead point in the open ground, with his head toward the fence, and his stern toward the tussock he had just crossed.

“Toho! where are you, Frank? There is a cock before him in the fence, close to the low

willow, the third from the crimson maple. Do you hear?"

"Ay, ay!"

"Then look to!"—and as he spoke, he walked forward with Heneage to the point.

Just as they came up to the tussock, however, over which Sancho had leaped so cleverly, and within a foot of its base, Heneage trod on a tuft of short grass, and close to his toe—Whir-r! up jumped a quail.

It took him so completely by surprise that he blazed away too quickly, and missed it; but Harry cut it down, before it had flown ten yards farther.

"That was a quail, not a cock!" shouted Forester, behind the willows, having heard the rush of his wing, and distinguished it from the fip-flap of a timber-doodle. "I told you we should find them!"

"He did not point this—Heneage trod it up. He is on his point still.—Be quiet."

As soon as they had re-loaded, and while Jem Crow was retrieving the dead bird, Archer said to his friend in a low voice—"Did you see that?"

"Yes, the dog's fore-feet literally grazed the

tuft in which the bird lay, as he jumped the tussock."

"Precisely! yet he did not scent or stand him."

"And *did—does* stand—for you see he has not moved—a woodcock, which is a bird of far weaker and more watery scent than the quail. Will you believe when you have seen?"

"It does look queer, I confess!—See, Jem has got the bird."

"Bring him hither, good dog. It is a young cock! you can distinguish the males by their white chaps! the cheeks of the females are reddish yellow. Now, Frank, are you ready?—I will flush him! Hie, cock! cock! Purrr!"

Flip-flip-flap! the bird rose in the thicket.

Bang! and a stream of feathers which drifted down wind, over the willow-tops, told them that Forester had done his duty.

Mark! mark! Fred, to your right! there goes another. Cleverly done! That was a good shot"—he added, as Heneage cut him down just as he twisted in toward the fence.

"Come over again, Frank, the dogs are making game, toward the meadow edge."

And Forester obeyed, and, out of the long

grass, where they had seen the quail alight, near the drain edge, they killed seven cock over dead points

One bird, the last at which they fired, was hit very hard, but flew nearly half-a-mile, before they marked him down near a single cedar in the open ground.

"By the way," said Archer, "there is a little spring and a boggy place yonder, I should not wonder if we find two or three more long-bills there. Do you remember, Frank, we killed nine there last autumn, on a frosty morning late in the season?"

"To be sure I do," said Frank; "it is a prime place for them to feed."

And they bagged four there accordingly, the crippled bird, and three fresh ones; and just as they were about to turn, the liver and white dog ran in upon a small bevy of eleven quail, and flushed them out of distance; for which he got a sound thrashing.

"Mark them, Frank!"

"I have marked them, they are down in the thorns near to the six I marked in, before. But pretty lads you are to mark! these are the birds which you swore dropped yonder, when in fact all

of them came on, except that single fellow which you killed."

Whew-y, whew-y, whew-y. The small and plaintive chirrup of a running bevy, came down the wind as he spoke, from the very rushes in which they had, scarce half-an-hour before, knocked up and killed eight woodcock.

"Do you hear that? do you hear that?" cried Harry, exultingly. "Now they have moved—now the dogs will find them at once! Come on—come on!"

And, wending their way hastily back, they had scarce reached the drain and the willows, before all the three dogs stood at once on three different birds; and, to be short, they found and bagged the eight quail, which they had seen alight, out of the self-same bogs, among which three men, and as many first-rate dogs, had been plunging and threshing about, for the better part of an hour, so short a time before.

"I will not ask you to believe," said Harry, "unless we find the first three by that single rush clump."

They did find them, and killed two, Archer missing the third with his second barrel.

"Now do you believe that quail can retain their scent?"

"Yes. It is proved," said Fred Heneage.

"No—I don't," said Frank Forester.

"Of course not," said Archer; "if either you, or Lord George Gordon, were ever, on a single occasion, to give in, after putting forth an opinion, I should turn Millerite, and believe that the world is coming to an end next April!"

"But how do you explain it, Harry?" said Heneage—"can it be instinct?"

"We will talk about that after dinner. Now let us follow up those bevies, and then find another."

Those bevies they did follow up, and nearly finish up, moreover; for out of eighteen birds which they had seen into the thorns, they bagged thirteen; one more killed, which they could not find; and four getting off, one missed, and three not shot at.

As they went down the swamp, they found two more bevies; but they flew at once into impracticable cover, dark pines over head, and swamp rhododendrons below; and they rendered a bad account of these, bringing to book only eight, out of the two bevies.

To make up for this bad luck, however, they came on a little plump of wood-duck floating on a small lilyed pool of black transparent water, enveloped in the thickest covert, and shot four of them; beside bagging ten more woodcock, and a brace of ruffed grouse.

The sun was nearly setting when they emerged from the crab-tree swamp, and found Tim and the horses quietly awaiting their arrival.

A cool spring was at hand, and the flasks of Ferintosh and Jamaica were in demand instantly; then they told up their game, and found the whole day's bag—most glorious bag indeed!—to consist of no less than forty-three woodcock, thirty-six quail, five ruffed grouse, and two couple of wood-duck.

“Now then,” said Harry, when the flasks were exhausted, and the game-bag filled to repletion—“now then, jump in as sharply as you please. For if we don't look out, we shall be late for dinner, and get cursed grievously by old Tom Draw, who was never backward in his life, at coming forward.”

CHAPTER V.

A VERY FAIR WOMAN—AND A VERY FAT MAN.

“GET away, lads!” sang out Harry, as he sprang to his box, lapping his whip up knowingly as he did so. Frank Forester had ensconced himself already in the back seat beside Timothy, who was employed in drawing the bear-skins, which the coming frost rendered very acceptable, about their knees. Heneage sat in front at Archer’s left-hand, with the stout fur-lined apron covering his lap. The dogs crouched at their feet, easy and warm, on the soft sheepskin rugs.

“Get away, lads!”—and away they went, at the word, untouched by the whip, at full twelve miles the hour, their ears laid back upon their necks, now nibbling at each other playfully, now snatching at the long steel bits, till the bright curb chains rang and jingled; while the well-made smooth-running wagon followed them almost noiselessly over the limestone road.

Dick followed on ‘Bright Selim’ at a slashing

gallop—no slower pace of the thoroughbred would keep way with the spanking trot of the chestnut geldings.

There is no lovelier scenery on earth, than that through which the homeward road of the sportsmen lay, along the northern slope of the Warwick mountain; with a mile's breadth of soft velvet meadows stretching out green and gentle to the left, the bright waters of the Wawayanda flashing in golden reaches to the level sunbeams far on their northern verge, and beyond the stream a long range of many coloured woodlands, half veiled by the purple haze of autumn, and the blue summits of Mount Adam and Mount Eve soaring, distinct in their dark azure, against the cloudless sky of autumn.

On the right, rose the mountain side continuous, ridge above ridge of leafy knolls with misty hollows intervening, until, a mile or more aloof, it terminated in a crest of gray and splintered crags, on which the westering rays dwelt lovingly.

Along the slope of this romantic chain the narrow country road ran sinuous; now diving into some fairy glen, through which a nameless rill trickled over its many-coloured pebbles; between

blocks of granite overrun with wild vines, and trunks of still verdant oaks ; now climbing some bold hillock, whence the view reached for miles and miles over the verdant champaign to the faint line of the Shawangunk hills, darkling against the bright horizon.

As the wagon mounted the brow of one of these little hillocks, a female figure turned into the road, from a by-path, perhaps a hundred yards in advance, mounted on a beautiful black horse with a long tail and mane ; and cantered along gently, without looking back, or appearing to notice their approach, in the same direction as they were proceeding.

As soon as he observed the presence of the fair equestrian on the road, Harry gathered his horses up a little, and held them well in hand, in order to avoid alarming her by coming up too quickly in her rear.

It was evident at a single glance that she was a lady ; for though she was riding all alone, there was that in her whole dress and air, as she sat her spirited horse, which distinguished her at once from the ordinary country lasses, in their large sun bonnets and calico skirts.

She wore on her head a neat beaver hat, with a long veil of brown barège floating over her left shoulder, and was dressed in an admirably fitting habit of rifle-green broad cloth, the long close waist, tight sleeves, and ample skirts of which set off the exquisite proportions of her round slender waist, her broad falling shoulders, and the full contour of her form, as they came up behind her.

That which struck Heneage the most forcibly, however, was the easy grace with which she managed her horse, evidently inclined somewhat to be skittish, the firm squareness of her seat, and the lightness of hand, with which she by turns humoured and controlled his mouth.

Taking it for granted, from the unconcern which Archer manifested at this fair apparition, that he must know who she was, Heneage was on the point of inquiring, when suddenly a large brindled mastiff sprang out from the yard in front of a cottage, with an outburst of fierce and savage baying, and dashed full at the head of the black horse.

Terrified at this fierce assault the fiery black wheeled round so violently, as would have un-

seated any less skilful equestrian, and yerked out his heels spitefully at the dog.

Then catching sight on a sudden of Harry's wagon, the approach of which he had not heard, he reared bolt upright, pawing the air with his fore-feet, so that it seemed as if he were in danger of falling backward.

But with unusual fearlessness and presence of mind the fair rider slacked her rein, and laid the ivory-handled riding whip, which she carried, repeatedly and sharply on his flanks.

With a great bound he alighted on his fore-feet, and again lashed out his heels viciously, and would have reared again—but Heneage, who had instinctively freed his legs from the bear-skin apron at the first attack of the mastiff, leaped out of the wagon, almost before Harry had pulled up his horses, and had the black firmly by the head, in less time than it has taken to describe it.

Two or three fruitless struggles he made, snorting and panting, between fright and anger; but the young man humoured him so judiciously, while he held him with a grasp like that of an iron vice, and spoke to him so gently, and in horse-language so intelligible, that he was mastered in a moment.

"Oh! Mr. Archer," said the girl, "how can I ever thank your friend enough? I believe he has saved my life; for I am sure I must have fallen, if he had reared once more."

"Oh! dear no, you would not, Miss D'Arcey,"—replied Archer, taking off his hat; "I never saw any one sit a horse so well in my life; and I flatter myself, I am a judge, you know. But Fred has always been a lucky dog, and this is the greatest *coup* of all! Allow me to present Mr. Frederick Heneage"—he added—"Miss Maria D'Arcey."

As he looked up to bow, Fred Heneage saw her face for the first time; and much as he had been led to expect from the grace and symmetry of her person, and from the exquisite melody of her low silver voice, all that he had expected fell far short of the reality.

A fair high forehead, pure and transparent as white alabaster; eyebrows and lashes black as night, fringing eyes of the brightest and most laughing azure; a little nose slightly *retroussé*, lending both glee and archness to the bright rich face; lips red as the carnation; a clear fair complexion with a warm rosy flush dawning through it; and a profusion of soft sunny nut-

brown hair, falling down in a flood of mazy ringlets, on either side her face, quite to the shoulders.

Such is a bare description of the features, which met the ardent gaze of Heneage, as he raised his head, and, uncovering his curly light brown locks, bowed gracefully and lowly.

But no words will describe the light of intelligence and soul which informed those fair features—the mingled expression of mirthful artlessness, and deep sensitive thought, which rendered that fair young face so wondrous beautiful and dazzling.

There was something in Heneage's eye, as it met hers, that made her blush slightly for a moment; and seeing her confusion, he was in turn somewhat embarrassed, and, for once in his life, at fault for words; when Harry relieved them both, by begging her to take a seat in his phaëton, and allow one of his men to ride her unruly horse homeward.

“I will engage to set you down at your own door in five minutes,” he added—“pray let me have that pleasure.”

“What! dismount like a recreant and own

myself conquered," she replied, laughing. " Oh fie! Mr. Archer, I fear you are but a false knight after all, giving me counsel, which were I to follow, you would despise me utterly—counsel, which you know to be wrong! If I were to dismount now, Daisy would never let me get upon his back again—naughty Daisy," she added, patting the arched neck of the black, which, having recovered now from its affright, bridled and whinnied conscious of her voice. " Besides, if mamma were to hear of this suddenly, she would never let me ride out alone again; and then good bye to all my dear romance!—no, no! I will gallop Daisy home, and whip him for his impudence well, too," she added—" the only kindness you can do me farther, is to let Timothy—how do you do, Timothy? I forgot you before—drive away that horrid dog. Look at him, he is waiting to fly at me again."

" Jump out, Tim; jump out, man; and knock that brute on the head with a big stone.—Oh! Mr. Reed," he went on, as the owner of the dog came out of the cottage,—“ it is too bad your keeping such a savage beast as that unchained.”

" Well—yes—he is some savage"—drawled out

the man, in a careless tone—"Cesar, git in doors, you!"

"Some savage! eh?" said Harry, half laughing, half indignant—"I should think he was. Here he was all but the cause of Miss D'Arcey being thrown from her horse, and perhaps killed, just now!"

"Well—I did see that he skeart the hoss some," he made answer.

"Well—you shall see something else too, Mr. Reed—you shall see that I will shoot him the very next time I come up the road, if he flies out—"

"No, no! you will do nothing of the sort," said the girl, laughing, "unless you want to quarrel with me. I will have no ill feeling between you and Mr. Reed. There is no harm done; and he will keep his dog fastened up in future. He would have been quite as sorry as yourself, Mr. Archer," she added, with a sly glance, "if I had been hurt."

"Well, he should ha' been tied up; that 'are ar' a fact"—responded the man, about one degree less sulky than his dog, yet moved, in his own despite, by the witchery of her manner.

"All is right then," she said, laughing again, "and I will say good night, with many, many thanks"—she added, looking toward Heneage. "By the bye, if your friend had not helped me so nicely, I don't believe I should have spoken to you, Mr. Archer; you have behaved very badly. It is above a month since you have been to see me—but I am afraid I must forgive you now. Good night."

And with the word, she turned her horse's head back to the road, put him into a canter, and gradually increased his pace, plying him pretty smartly with the whip, till he was almost at full speed. At about a quarter of a mile's distance, she turned off into a cross road, and was lost to sight.

"How beautifully she rides! what a lovely girl! who is she, Frank? who is she?"

"She is the second daughter of a Colonel D'Arcey, who died some years ago on the Western frontier. Her mother, who lives about two miles from 'the Box,' is one of the most delicious old ladies in the world, and a great friend of mine. Maria has an elder sister, a nice girl too in *petite santé*. But look you, Fred, I must not have you falling in love with either of them."

"I am not a very falling-in-love man," said Fred, laughing, "but I cannot see why not. She seems to me a very loveable sort of person; and I can afford to love anybody I like, thank God! why not, Frank?"

"Because she has got a brother, a lawyer in York, who is just as unloveable a sort of person, as my fair friend is loveable, and you have no idea yet how loveable she is. He is as hard, as crabbed, and as narrow-minded a snob, as ever you met withal. He tried hard to hinder me from darkening his mother's doors, within which he is a perfect domestic tyrant, until he discovered, in the first place, that I was not a marrying man, and had no thought of the delicate Julia, or the fair Maria; and in the second, that he could not quarrel with me, unless by being guilty of impertinence so gross as to earn evil consequences."

"But why—why, in the devil's name, is he so vicious?"

"He is naturally a brute, in the first place—in the next, he is a bigoted fanatic—in the third, a violent ultra Native American, and hater of all d—d foreigners—and, to conclude, a howling demagogue, who makes vast capital by declaiming

against British influence, British tyranny, and British gold. I verily believe, he would rather see his sister married to an American counterfeiter, fresh out of the States prison, than to an English gentleman of wealth, accomplishment and honour. He is a choice specimen of all the worst points of his countrymen ; thank God ! a very rare—I hope, a solitary specimen. But, as I said before, I must have no falling in love, Fred."

" I don't know," said Heneage, laughing ; " I never thought of such a thing before ; but now that you have told me all this, it alters the matter very much. The spice of difficulty, perhaps the spice of danger, flavours the dish of matrimony marvellous well, men say. I think—I think—I will fall in love with her."

" There is many a true word spoken in jest ;" said Harry Archer, gravely " but I would rather give a hundred pounds, than see this jest come true." Just as he uttered these last words, they reached the top of the hill, on which the gate of the Shooting Box opened ; and descried, coming up the opposite side of the ascent, in his large two-horse wagon, the renowned Tom Draw.

His large double-seated wagon of a bright

green hue picked out with black, was almost entirely concealed in the mass of buffalo hides, among which, occupying almost the whole width of the front seat, the fat man sat sublime.

His horses, full sixteen hands in height, the one a magnificent red roan, the other an iron gray, breasted the steep hill, with arched crests and high round action, at full ten miles the hour ; and, as Harry was wont to say, but for the trifling difference in their colour, few gentlemen in any country could boast a handsomer or better matched pair, not to say as good travellers, as that of mine host of Warwick.

But the man—the fat man !

A volume would scarce suffice to describe his outward man ; a library would fail to convey a just idea of the excellences, the oddities, the humours of this most worthy, most original, most happy of characters.

Wrapped in his ample overcoat of drab pilot cloth, with buckskin mittens on his hands, and a huge fur cap on his thick iron-gray locks, beneath which shone out, beaming with mirth, and gaiety, and genuine good humour, the broad expanse of his ample and handsome face, Fred Heneage, who

had heard of him both from Harry, and Frank Forester, but who had never seen him, thought he had never beheld such a mountain of flesh.

His clear brown eye beamed with unutterable humour, beneath the penthouse of his thick shaggy grizzled eyebrows, giving expression by their well marked line, to a broad and expansive forehead. The nose was small and well-shaped; but the mouth, the mouth, was the great feature of the bold, manly, lion-like face—the mouth, telling a world of character, with its arch dimples, full-fraught with merriment and mischief at the corners, its firm, well-cut curve, speaking of energy and resolution, and a will of iron—and the full, rich-red nether lip betokening a little—yet not a very little either—of voluptuous, perhaps sensual taste.

As he sat in his wagon, perched on the high soft cushion of his easy seat, with all the lower part of his person enveloped in the warm buffalo robes, the effect of his enormous size was in some sort concealed, or at least diminished; inasmuch as the breadth and rotundity were not now contrasted with the want of height; which, when standing, rendered his size more conspicuous.

Still, as he measured the vast breadth of his shoulders, and suffered his eye to fall over the regular protuberance which swelled outward from his chin downward in fair round proportion, Fred looked inquiringly at Harry, and said—

“Jest apart, do you mean to tell me that huge animal can shoot—can walk?”

“I never saw a better shot—I have rarely walked with a stauncher walker.. He is not fast, of course, but where the ground is solid, he is unwearied. And without any exception, he is the most thorough and best sportsman I know anywhere.”

“The deuce! How tall is he?”

“About five foot six, and measures round the place where his waist should be, five foot nine, thus being literally larger round than he is long. His thigh is bigger in girt than my chest, and I am not exactly a baby. He weighs three hundred and forty-two pounds, or in horseman’s weight, with which you are of course more familiar than with pounds, twenty-four stone six pounds. And, by Jove! his heart is as large as his whole body. Upon my word, it is no exaggeration to say he is all heart.”

" Not a bit of exaggeration," said Frank Forester ; " I really *love* Tom."

" He is an extraordinary fellow indeed," said Harry ; " and I value him very highly, for his sterling and excellent qualities, independent of his social and entertaining disposition and humour. How are you, Tom? how are you?" he exclaimed, as they arrived within hail, exactly opposite to the gate, which Timothy jumped down to open.

" How be you, boys? how be you?" shouted the fat man, in a deep rich joyous tone, which bespoke his hearty and jovial character. " I 'm pretty smart, now the cool weather's come. What sport to-day?"

" Very fair, Tom," replied Archer ; " very fair, indeed; not quite as much as you and I have done in old times—but very fair as things go now-a-days: about ninety head, I think, in all, and half of them woodcock."

" That's not so slim any ways. Least ways, not so slim for you boys, when you harn't got old Tom along with you. For you carn't mark quail no how—not one on you, worth a cuss—nor shoot them, nuther. Least ways, Frank carn't by G—!"

" Well, and whose fault was it we hadn't old Tom with us? Did not I send you word to come over to breakfast, and bring your cannon, and that brute Dash! you are getting lazy in your old age, or playing possum, you old hippopotamus."

" Hippo—*devil!*!" answered the fat man. " Come, git them little sorrel scrubs o' yourn out of my way, or I drive over you, torights, and smash you into nauthen. Git on! Forester's kind o' dry. His little jaws is sticked together for want o' mystening—or else he 's so drunk he carn't speak. Git on dew! I want 's a drink myself. I harn't drinded only wunst since I left hum?"

" Once? how the deuce did you manage that? where did you get a chance to drink?"

" Jem Decker's asleep up the road yonder, under the big black walnut; and I see a black stun jug by him. I guessed he 'd drinded it pretty well down, for he was 'mazin hard and fast, I tell you. And I thought if so be he waked up and found any left, he 'd be doin himself a mischief likely—he 's the G— d—dest critter when he 's drunk—so I jest pulled old Roan up, and got out and hitched! Then I took up the jug and shook it, jest to judge like how much there was in, you know."

" And how much was there, Tom?"

" Only a little mite, I tell you—a pint maybe, or a trifle over. Well; when he heard the liquor—chuck, chuck in the jug, like, Jem he stirred, and turned over on his back, and seemed oneasy kind o'—so I made no more work, but jest drinded it up—"

" And left the jug empty, I'll be bound—you old heathen!" said Forester.

" What! do you think I'd steal?" replied the fat man, with a mighty show of indignation. " No, no, I made a fair change with Jem—no one can say I stealed it; and what I left instead o' the old apple-jack, 'ill do him a plaguy sight more good, when he wakes and finds his biler jest as hot as the devil, and hotter."

" What did you leave instead, eh, Tom?"

" First best fish oil!" replied Tom with a monstrous explosion of merriment. " It did smell some, I reckon; but Jem's not particular, and I doosn't begrudge him the smell no how."

" You give him the smell in!" said Forester, when he could speak for laughing; " well, that was fair any how. Rather above the bargain, eh?"

" Well, I don't know," said Tom. " His apple-jack stinked some too. I guess 't warn't the first time there 'd been fish oil in the jug—and I warnts a glass of Archer's old Jamaiky to wrench my mouth out. Git on dew; whip up them scrubs, or I 'll be a top on you down the hill. Git on, boys, dew!"

CHAPTER VI.

A GOOD FEED DULY DEFENDED.

"Now, Timothy," exclaimed Harry Archer, as he dismounted from the seat of his wagon at the door; "run in, and see what o'clock it is; and then ask Mrs. Deighton if dinner will be punctual."

"It's haaf paast faive, sur," answered Timothy from the hall, "and t' dinner 'll be upon t' teable at six, and no mistaek!"

"That's well, for I'm as hungry as a hawk," said Archer. "We shall have just enough time to make ourselves comfortable, Fred. Where the deuce do you mean to stow yourself, Frank?"

"Oh! never fear. I have arranged that with Timothy. I shall take possession of his room to-night."

"Very well: now lose no time, lads; for Mrs. Deighton's six is sharp six you 'll remember. Look here, Tom, you will find this week's 'Spirit'

here, and the last ‘Turf Register,’ can you amuse yourself with them, ‘till we get fixed, as you’d call it, I suppose?”

“Yes, yes,” answered Tom; “I’ll amuse myself, I promise you; but it won’t be with no sperrit but Jamaiky sperrits—them’s the best sperrits for an arternoon. Come, Timothy, you lazy Injun, where are you snooopin’ off to, cuss you? Git me the sperrits and ice water—your master haint got sense to order up no licker.”

“If you have not got sense to order what you want in my house, I am not bound to find you in brains.”

“The rum will find his brains, I’ll warrant it,” said Forester; “for I am certain, whatever brains he’s got, are in his belly.”

“Sartain!” responded Tom; “Sartain they be—that’s why it’s sich a nice, fat, round one. No *head* wouldn’t hold *my* brains! a stoopid little know nauthen, like you be, may keep his small mite o’ brains in his head, though it beant no bigger than a nutshell; but it does take a belly, and a good, rousin’, old, biggest kind o’ belly, to hold mine. And the rum will find them torights, and sharp them up too, wust kind, I reckon.”

" You do not make much toilet, Harry, I presume?" asked Fred, as he sauntered away toward his bed-room, after staring at old Tom, in a vain attempt to make him out, for half a moment.

" Just as you please about that, Fred. This is liberty-hall. But I do always dress for dinner, even when I'm quite alone."

" The deuce you do! That must be a monstrous bore!"

" Have you known Archer so long," asked Frank Forester, " and not discovered yet that his greatest pleasure in life is boring himself?"

" It's very well his greatest pleasure in life aren't in borin' other people, as you calls it," interposed Tom, who was growing a little crusty at the non-appearance of the ardent—" Least ways I know whose is—eh, little wax skin?"

" I do not find it so," continued Harry, without taking heed of the by-play between Forester and old Draw, who were for every sparring one with the other; " on the contrary, I think life is not worth having if we strip it of the decencies; and, living as I do in the country three fourths of the year, and more than half the time alone, I find there is much more danger of becoming somewhat

slovenly and careless, than of being over nice. When you don't meet a lady three times in a year, or a man who shaves above twice a week, unless on special occasions, it is easy enough to degenerate into a mere boor. I at least will keep clear of that. Some folks think it manly and knowing to assimilate themselves to the roughest and the rudest of the rough and rude, because they chance to live in remote rural districts—I am not one of them."

"I don't think no one will find fault with you for that, no how," interposed Tom—"no one who knows you. The darned critter's allus dressed as neat as a new pin. And his dinner table, oh, the devil, it's just like a jeweller's shop in Broadway."

"Yes; and of that more anon. I have been attacked for that too, before now. But we'll talk about that while we are feeding; eh, Tom?"

"I'm willin' so as you aren't over long a dressin'."

"Well, here comes the Jamaica for you; and I will not be a quarter of an hour."

Nor was he; for in a little more than ten minutes he returned, neatly attired in a puce-coloured cut-away coat, white waistcoat and black

trousers, as natty and well-dressed as possible, but without a shade of foppery—the thing which of all he most abhorred—perceptible either in his exterior or his manner.

A moment afterward Frank Forester made his *entrée*, and, as usual, his practice was as different from his principle, as anything in nature could be. To judge him from his talk you would have supposed that a red flannel shirt and tow trousers were his ultimatum and beau ideal in the way of dress; yet forth he came, very fine—to say the truth, a little too fine—so fine, indeed, that it required all his remarkably good looks and quiet manner, to redeem his attire from the charge of being *kiddy* at least, if not tigerish.

He wore the full-dress blue coat of his old corps—the first dragoons—a crack royal regiment, which he had left but a year or two before—with its richly embossed gold buttons, and black velvet cuffs and collar. His shirt was rich with open work and Mecklin lace, and fastened in front by enamelled studs of exquisite workmanship connected by slight chains of Venetian gold. His crimson velvet waistcoat was adorned with garnet buttons, and his trousers of Inkson's most elaborate

cut, fitting his shapely leg as if they had been made upon it, displayed his high instep *très bien chaussée* in a black gauze silk stocking, and patent leather pumps.

Tom Draw stared somewhat wildly at this display, of which he certainly had never seen before even the counterfeit presentiment; and, though he was rigged himself in his best swallow-tailed sky-blue, canary coloured waistcoat, and gray inexpressibles, he began to think, as he afterward expressed himself, that he had nauthen on him no how, barrin' his skin, and that rayther o' the thinnest, and the dirtiest at that.

Scarcely was Frank well established in Harry's best arm-chair, before Fred made his appearance in a plain snuff-coloured dress coat, and the rest of his garb quiet, dark, and unpretending.

"Why what's all this about, in the name of wonder?" he exclaimed, looking at Frank attentively.

"Only a little of the heavy dragoon breaking out, Fred," answered Archer. "It does so periodically—like the fever and ague, and like it, thank heaven! it is not catching. If I were to live a thousand years, I never should forget the

first day I saw my gentleman in this country. He was walking up Broadway, arm-in-arm with poor Power, who had just landed on his second visit to this country. They had two of the narrowest pinched up hats—Tom Duncombe's, only *more so!*—stuck in the most jaunty style on the opposite sides of their heads—each had his outer hand, as they swaggered along arm-in-arm, stuck in the hind pocket of his coat, and the skirt well brought round on the opposite hip—each, to complete the picture, at every second pace, gave the genuine sabretash kick with the outer leg—unluckily in poor Power's case it was the right leg; but that made no difference in life—and then the toggery! Only conceive Master Frank in a bright pea-green body coat, with large basket buttons of solid silver; a crimson cachemire neck-cloth; elastic tartan pantaloons, a little tighter than his skin, alternate checks, each check two inches square, of black and the brightest azure; and to conclude, more chains and spurs and iron boot heels—more clash and clang, in walking along the street, than there are to be found in a squadron of cuirassiers. By Jove! it was inimitable!"

"What did you do, Harry?" asked Fred, laughing, while Frank tried to grin, though not with the best grace in the world.

"Do? Bolted, to be sure! what would you have had me do? I would not have spoken to him in the street in that rig for any sum! I was not very well known in New York myself at that time, and I saw old Hays on the other side of the street quietly contemplating my friend there, with a cool confidential nod of the head, and wink addressed to his own other eye—as who should have said, 'Aha! my fine fellow, it will not be many days before you and I shall be better acquainted!'"

What exclamation or asseveration would have followed can never now be known, for just as Forester stood up, not a little nettled, Timothy threw the door open, and said,

"T' dinner's upon t' teable, please Sur."

And thereupon Frank's face relaxed into a mild and placid smile, and, drawing Tom's arm under his own,—

"Allow me the honour," he said, "Mistress Draw, to hand you in to dinner."

"No you don't, little wax skin—no you don't—not through that door no how, we'd git stuck

there, boy, and they'd niver pull us out ; and we'd starve likely with the smell o' the dinner in our noses, and the champagne a bustin' under our eyes out o' the very bottles to be drinked, and us not there to drink it. No, no, we'll run no resks now."

And with the words they passed into the dining-room, arranged as on the previous evening, except that, for two covers, four were now laid on the white damask cloth, and that a pair of tall silver wine coolers occupied the centre of the table, with the long necks of hock and champagne flasks protruding.

At the left of each guest stood a pint decanter of delicate straw-coloured sherry ; and at his right four glasses, a long stalked beaker of old-fashioned Venice crystal, a green German hock glass embossed with grapes and vine leaves, a thin capacious sherry glass, with a curled lip so slender that it almost bent as you drank from it, and a slim-shanked shallow goblet for Bordeaux or Burgundy.

There was but one comestible, however, on the table, a deep silver tureen, with a most savoury and game-like odour exuding from the chinks of its rich cover.

"I would have given you some raw natives to begin with," said Harry, "knowing how much Tom likes them, but we can't get the crustaceous bivalves up hither with distinguished success, until the frost sets in."

"I'm right glad on 't, by the Eternal!" exclaimed Tom; "nasty, cold, chillin', watery trash! jist blowin' out your innards for no good, afore you git to the grist o' dinner;—what kind o' soup's that, Timothy?"

"A soup of my own invention," answered Harry; "and the best soup in the world, *me judice*. Strong venison soup, made as we make hare soup at home; a good rich stock to begin with, about ten pounds of the lean from the haunch brayed down into the pottage, about a dozen cloves and a pint of port, and to conclude, the scrag of the neck cut into bits two inches square, done brown in a covered stewpan, and thrown in with a few forced meat balls when the soup is ready. You can add, if you please, a squeeze of a lemon and a dash of cayenne, which I think improve it. It is piping hot; and not bad, I think."

"I have tasted something of the kind in the Highlands, at Blair of Athole," said Frank Forester.

"I have not," replied Harry. "The Scotch venison soup is made *clear*, and though a capital thing, I like this *purée* better."

"So do I, Harry," said Fred Heneage; "and I should think by the gusto with which you speak of it, that you not only invented, but made it."

"You'd think just about right, then," answered Tom, as he thrust out his plate for a second ladlefull. "He and I did make the first bowl of it, as iver was made. And it tuk us a week—yes, a fortnight, I guess, before we got it jest right. I will say that for Harry, the darned critter is about as good at bringing game *up* right on the table, as he is at bringing them *down* right in the field."

"Yes! and for that very thing, I have been assailed," said Harry laughing, "as lacking the true spirit of a sportsman, as not enjoying the thing in its high ennobling spirit, as not a pure worshipper in heart and intellectual love of the divine Artemis; but a mere sensualist and glutton, making my belly a god, and degrading my good gun into a mere tool for the slaves of Epicurus!"

"Treason! high treason! Name the rash man. Hold him up bodily to our indignation!"

"First let us drink! That pale sherry is delicate and very dry. Will you have champagne,

Tom? No—very well. Here is a health then to C. E. of the ‘Buffalo Patriot.’”

“C. E.! Who the devil is C. E.?” cried all three in a breath.

“Alias, J. B.”

“And who then is J. B.?”

“The man wot stabbed me in the tenderest part—which he, I suppose, would say is my abdomen.”

“Are you in earnest, Harry?”

“I am gravely in earnest, when I say that he taxed me seriously, though sportively, with all that I have stated. He said that, in my admiration of good things, in dwelling on the melting richness of a wood-duck, or the spicy game flavour of a grouse, in preferring a silver plate whereon to eat my venison, to an earthen trencher, in carrying out a bottle of champagne and cooling it in a fresh spring for my luncheon, instead of trusting to execrable rye or apple whiskey, I prove myself degenerate, and no true votary of the gentle woodcraft. He is *afraid* that I cannot rough it!”

“Is he, indeed? Poor devil!”

“He don’t know much then, no how, that chap!” answered Tom, as he went largely into the bar-

bacued perch, which had taken the place of the pottage. "Least ways he don't know much, if he thinks as a chap carn't rough it because he knows how to eat and drink when there's no need of roughing it. I've seen fellows as niver had seen nauthen fit to eat nor drink in their lives, turn up their darned nasty noses at a good country dinner in a country tavern, where a raal right down gentleman, as had fed allus on the fat of the land, could dine pleasantly. Give me a raal gentleman, one as sleeps soft, and eats high, and drinks highest kind, to stand roughing it; and more sense to C. E. next time he warnts to teach his grandmother."

"How do you like this fish?"

"Capital—capital!"

"Well, all its excellence, except that it is firm, lies in the cookery. It is insipid enough and tasteless, unless barbacued."

"Then you were wise to barbacue it."

"And how should I have learned to barbacue it, if I had not thought about such things? No, no, boys; I despise a man very heartily, who cannot dine just as happily upon a bit of salt pork and a biscuit, and perhaps an onion, ay, and enjoy it as well, washed down with a taste of whiskey qua-

lified by the mountain-brook—or washed down with a swallow of the brook unqualified—as he would enjoy canvass-back and venison with Champagne and Bordeaux. Who cannot bivouac as blithely and sleep as soundly under the starlit canopy of heaven, as under damask hangings—when there is cause for dining upon pork, and for bivouacing? But there is one thing, boys, that I despise a plaguy sight more; and that is, a thick-headed fool, who likes salt pork as well as canvass-back and turtle—who does not see any difference between an ill-cooked dish swimming in rancid butter, and a *chef d'œuvre* of Carême or Ude, rich with its own pure gravy. And yet more than the thick-headed fool, do I abhor the pig-headed fool, who thinks it brave, forsooth, and manly and heroical withal, and philosophical, to affect a carelessness which does not belong to him, and to drink cider sperrits when he can drink *Sillery sec* of the first growth. And that being said, open that champagne, Timothy.”

“ So much for C. E. ?” inquired Forester.

“ No, no !” exclaimed Harry eagerly ; “ I deny any such *sequitur* as that. C. E. is a right good fellow—or was, at least, when I knew him. It is

a weary while ago since he supped with me in New York, the very night before he left it—never, I believe, to return—at least since then I have never seen him—and many a warm heart has grown cold, and many a brown head gray in the interim. But when I knew C. E. he would never drink bad liquor when he could come by good—and right well did he know the difference—and, by the way, while vituperating me for my gourmandize, he shows that he is tarred a little with the same stick. He abuses me for saying that the wood-duck is as good a bird as flies, except the canvass-back, asserting that the blue-winged teal is better."

"Out upon him!" exclaimed Forester; "the blue-winged teal is fishy, nine times out of ten."

"Ay, Frank; but he is speaking of the teal on the Great Lakes; and I dare say he is right. It is to the fact that he is the only duck seen on the sea-board who eschews salt water and salt sedges, that the summer duck—for that is his proper name—owes his pre-eminence over all the other wild fowl of this region. Now, as the blue-winged teal, or garganey, is in the same predicament on the lakes, I think it very questionable

whether in that country he may not be as good, nay better, than my favourite."

"Are you in earnest? Do you think that the diet of ducks makes so much difference in their quality?" asked Heneage.

"So much? It makes *all* the difference. What renders the canvas-back of the waters of the Chesapeak, the very best bird that flies; while here, in Long Island sound, or on the Jersey shore, he is, at the best, but a fourth rate duck? The wild celery which he eats there, and which he cannot get here for his life."

"A roast leg of mutton!—by no means a bad thing, Harry," said Fred Heneage, "when it is old enough and well roasted."

"This is six years old," answered Archer, "black-faced, Scotch, mountain, of my own importation, my own feeding, and my own killing. It has been hanging three weeks, and, by the way it cuts, I believe it is in prime order; done to a turn I can see that it is. Will you have some?"

"Will a fish swim? Where is the currant jelly?"

"On the side-board. I don't consider currant jelly orthodox with mutton, which is by far too

good a thing to be obliged to pass itself for what it is not."

"I agree with you," said Frank; "I hate anything that is like something else."

"Of course; all good judges do. That puts me in mind of what Washington Irving once told me, that he never ate *clams*, by any chance, because he was quite sure that they would be *oysters* if they could!"

"Excellent! excellent!" said Fred and Forester, both in a voice; whereupon Tom added,

"They can't come it, though; stewed clams is not briled iseters!"

"No more than mosquitoes are lobsters, which was John Randolph's sole objection to the insects."

"And do you really prohibit currant jelly with roast mutton?"

"I don't prohibit anything; but I don't eat it, and I think it bad taste to do so. Venison I think the only thing that is improved by it. Canvass-back ducks I think it ruins. Nor should I think C. E.'s plum jelly with grouse, one whit better. The sharpness of currant jelly is very suitable to the excessive fat of English park-fed venison; but with any lean meat I think it need-

less, to say the best. There is but one sauce for any kind of gallinaceous game, when roasted, whether his name be grouse, partridge, pheasant, quail, or wild turkey."

"Right, Harry, and that is bread sauce."

"And that is bread sauce, made of the crumb of a very light French roll, stewed in cream, and passed through a tamis; one small white onion may be boiled in it, but must be taken out before it is served up to table; a lump of fresh butter as big as a walnut may be added, and a very little black pepper. Let it be thick and hot, and nothing else is needed; unless, indeed, you like a few fried crumbs, done very crisp and brown."

"Open that other flask of champagne, Timothy; Tom's glass is empty, and he begins to look angry. Will you take wine with me?" said Heneage, who had hit Tom's feelings to a hair.

"In course I will," replied Tom joyously; "when Harry gits a talking about his darned stews and fixins, he niver recollects that a body will git dry."

"Pass it round, Timothy," said Harry; "that's not a bad move of old Tom's by any means. I believe I was riding one of my hobbies a little

hard. But it provokes me to see the good things, which are destroyed in this country by bad cookery; and it provokes me yet worse, to hear hypocrites and fools talk as if it were wrong for the creature to enjoy the good things designed for his use by a good Creator."

"It is about as rational truly as to assert that it is impious to plant a tree or cultivate a bed of exotics in order to make finer a view naturally beautiful; because Providence did not plant them originally there."

"Yes! sartain! yes, I go that," said old Tom, who was always death agin humbugs, as he would have said himself—"or wicked to wear breeches becase natur did not fix them on our hinder eends in the creashun. I do think, too, though I niver hearn of 'till Archer come up this a-way, and larned us how to eat and drink, as bread sauce doos go jist as nat'rally with roast quails, as breeches on a ——"

"Shut up, you old sinner," said Harry, laughing. "Here come the ruffed grouse, larded and boiled, for boiling which Fred so abused me this morning."

"He won't abuse you, when he has once

tasted them," said Forester. " It is the best way of cooking them."

" Well—yes—they bees kind o' dry meat, roasted; but then I don't find no great faults with the dryness, specially when one's got jist this wine to wrench his mouth with arter."

" They *are* good; with this celery sauce especially."

" As is bread sauce to roast, so is celery sauce to boiled game—Q.e.d."

" There is a *soupçon* of onion in this also, is there not?"

" Just enough to swear by; do you think it too much?"

" I did not say a taste, I said a *soupçon*; are you answered?"

" There aint no Souchon in it no how; nor no Hyson, nother. He'll be a swearin' it's Java coffee next," said Tom, waxing again somewhat wrothy.

" He is thirsty again," said Frank; " what shall it be? I say hock after this boiled white meat."

" Right, Frank, for a thousand!" said Harry; " and after the woodcock, which Tim is bringing in, we'll broach a flask of burgundy. Hock

with your white game, burgundy with your brown. But hold, hold! Timothy, Mr. Draw will not touch that hock; it's too thin and cold for his palate."

"Rot-gut!" replied Tom. "None o' your hocks nor your clarets for me; there aint no good things made in France except champagne wine and old Otard brandy."

"Well, which of the two will you have, Tom?"

"That 'are champagne 's good enough for the likes of me."

"Oh! don't be modest, pray. It will hurt you!"

"What this here wine?—not what I've drinked on it, no how. I could drink all of a dozen bottles of it, without its hurtin' me a mite."

The woodcock followed, were discussed, and pronounced perfect; they were diluted with a flask of *Nuits Richelieu*, so exquisitely rich and fruity, and of so absolute a bouquet, that even the hostility of fat Tom toward all French wines was drowned in the goblet, thrice the full of which, mantling to the brim, he quaffed in quick succession.

The Stilton cheese, red herring, and caviare,

which succeeded, again moved his ire, and were denounced as stinkin' trash fit for no one to eat but a darned greedy Englishman; but the bumper of port again mollified him, and he said that if they ate them cussed nasty things jist to make the wine taste the better for the contrast, he didn't see no sense in that, for it was mazin' nice without no nastiness afore it.

The devilled biscuits he approved mightily, as creating a wholesome drought, which he applied himself to assuage by emptying three bottles of pale sherry to his own cheek, while the three young men were content with one double magnum of Chateau Latour. But when he emptied the third bottle he was as cool and collected as if he had not tasted a single drop, and was half disposed to run rusty, at being summoned into the library to take a cup of coffee and an old cheroot; but here again his wrath was once more assuaged by the curaçao, of which he drank off half a tumbler, and then professed himself ready for a quiet rubber, while Tim was gittin supper.

CHAPTER VII.

THE QUADRUPEDS' QUARTERS.

THERE had been a very heavy shower during the night, but it had cleared off bright and cold before morning broke; and now, as the sun rose cloudless in the pearly and transparent sky, no view can be conceived more beautiful than that which lay before the eyes of Heneage, who had arisen early, and stood gazing over the landscape from the porch of the Shooting Box.

The summits of the Warwick Hills, round-headed, bold and vast, cut sharp and clear, with all their wooded outlines, in dark purple masses against the lucent sky; beneath this massive screen, sparkling with dew, and gay with ten thousand gorgeous hues, the noble woods beyond the little river concealed the level fields which spread their gentle undulations to the foot of the distant mountains. Nearer yet to the eye, in the

middle ground, the wild rocky bank, fringed with its feathery junipers, and carpeted with glossy-leaved azalea, was veiled by the thin mist, which seethed up, white as snow, from the bed of the rushing torrent, to be dissipated, long ere it reached the upper air, by the increasing power of the sun-beams.

In the foreground the smoothly-shaven lawn, as green as an emerald, and almost as bright from the lustre of the quick glancing dew-drops, sloped away gently from the portico to the stream's margin, broken by two or three clumps only of rare exotic rhododendrons, and one large osier basket full of roses of all colours and varieties, with a luxuriant honeysuckle entwined about its handle.

Heneage stood there perhaps ten minutes, looking out with a well-pleased eye, and framing to himself, half unconsciously, ideal pictures of some such solitude as this to be his "dwelling place,"

"With one fair spirit for *his* minister,"

while Archer's favourite tortoise-shell cat, which had followed him out of the parlour, was rubbing its glossy sides against his leg, and purring loudly, though unnoticed.

While he was still gazing at the little landscape, discovering some new charm every moment, and yet wondering within himself whether Harry did not find it very lonely all by himself there in the winter, a quick firm footstep resounded on the hall floor behind him, and Archer's cheerful voice crying aloud—

“The top of the morning to you, Master Fred; I had no notion that you were such an early man. Why, the sun is scarce out of bed yet.”

“Oh, yes, in the country I like to be moving early; besides, I thought you breakfasted about this time.”

“Never before eight, unless when I am going to make an early start, and a long day's shooting. And never at all, when Forester's up here. Timothy tells him all sorts of lies about the time, but it is all to no purpose; the little devil knows instinctively what o'clock it is, even with the window shutters closed, and nothing can induce him to get up in what he calls the night.”

“And you classed me as being in the same category, eh?”

“To say the truth, yes! and I half believe this fit of early rising is only accidental. Perhaps the

fair Maria's charms have banished 'nature's soft nurse.'"

" You be hanged! If the truth must be told, it was the infernal racket that your fat friend kicked up, when he was starting, not metaphorically but literally, in the night, that aroused me. Where the deuce did he sleep? and what took him away this morning? I thought he was going to stay and shoot with us to-day."

" He slept upon the sofa in the library—he went away to get his gun and Dash, and his shooting toggery. How did he rouse you? I did not hear him."

" Roaring like a bull for his *bitters*! What the devil *are* bitters, old fellow?"

" Oh! you will learn that soon, if you cultivate Tom. By the way, what do you think of him?"

" Think! By the Lord! he is far beyond all thinking about. If he were not alive now, I should be quite certain that Shakspere must have made Falstaff after him; as it is, I fancy Nature must have made him after Falstaff."

" All but the cowardice, I grant you; but the old dog is pluck to the back-bone."

" How did you make him out?"

“I discovered him, and it is not the act of my life of which I am the least proud. I expect that I shall go down to history, at least, side by side with Columbus, Vasco di Gama, and such like worthies, as the discoverer of Tom Draw, the great American original.”

“He is indeed an original!”

“He is *the* original—the only original I have ever met with in the United States. It is an odd thing, and I cannot account for it, but original and eccentric characters appear to me to be the growth of old countries. But come, Tom will be back to breakfast soon, and by that time Frank will be afoot, and bellowing for his breakfast, of which he will eat more than any two people in the room, while swearing all the time that he has no appetite. Do you like to walk round, and look at the stable and the kennels?”

“Of all things. I have been wondering where they are placed; for there is no glimpse to be seen of any outhouse.”

“This way; I will show you; they are close by, though hidden by my trees and trellises.”

The cottage stood, as it has been described, midway the slope of the hill which arose very

rapidly behind; with an open grove of tall white oaks and hickories growing close down to the rear of the building, and sweeping off in a long receding curve from either of the angles to the right hand and left, a few scattered trees only dotting the lawn, and flanking the ends of the cottage.

A few yards only within the thick wood at each extremity of the house, a tall latticed screen, composed of rough gnarled branches, unbarked and fresh from the forest, wound away in irregular lines until it was lost to sight in the aisles of the woodland, covered with ivy and parasitic creepers, such as thrive in the shade.

This rustic fence, which was at least eight feet in height, and covered with perennial verdure, completely effected the concealment of the out-buildings, while it was in its turn so far hidden by the outskirts of the grove, as to give no appearance of regularity or artificial stiffness.

Opening a small doorway in the fence, not far from the gable of the house, Harry led his friend into a narrow gravel walk, which wound for a short distance in and out among the tall trees, and then entered a little court immediately be-

hind the cottage, covered with smooth white gravel, and having in the centre a large tank four or five feet deep by twelve in diameter, full of beautifully clear spring water, which rushed into it continually from a stone spout, with a sweet gurgling sound, and passed out again by an aperture below the lip of masonry without ever over-flowing it. In this tank there stood half-a-dozen submerged flower pots, containing water-lilies of different colours and varieties, their broad glossy leaves floating upon the transparent surface, and affording a grateful shadow to the gold and silver fish with which it was stocked abundantly. In addition to these finny sparklers, a dozen or two at least of beautiful tame summer ducks were dipping and disporting themselves on the clear waters, or preening their feathers on the brink, while on the gravel of the court-yard twenty or thirty little snow-white bantams were strutting about proud of their feathery pantaloons, and as many pink-eyed fan-tailed pigeons were circling amorously one about the other, making the air vocal with their low plaintive cooing.

When Harry entered the little enclosure, pigeons and summer ducks and bantam fowls, all

came crowding up around him for their share of the handful of peas and corn, with which the pockets of his shooting jacket were provided.

"This is my poultry yard, what do you think of it, and my little pets?—Why, Peter, you impudent little villain," he added, "are you not ashamed of yourself?" as a pretty white pigeon, after circling two or three times about him, fluttered up, and alighted on his shoulder.

"They are very nice, and very pretty," said Fred. "But I must confess that I hate pets. It is so disagreeable to have them killed and eaten, after you have been playing with them, and coaxing them."

"Killed and eaten! Do you suppose that I am such a Goth? No, Fred, the greatest cruelty I commit to these little folks is to devour the eggs of the bantams, the squabs of the white pigeons before they have emerged from their boxes, and the young of these summer ducks, which, as soon as they are able to take care of themselves, are kept away from the water, and fed in separate coops, in the other yard, upon celery. None of these breeding people are ever destined for the kitchen. In the other court,

which is under Mrs. Deighton's especial superintendence, there are never less than a dozen wood-duck, and as many eapons, cooped and waxing fat. But thither I never enter in. But come, we are losing time—this is the way to the stables."

And with the words he opened a second door near the pigeon house, and passed with his friend into a larger court yard, neatly paved with cobble stones, having, like the first, a large tank in the centre continually fed by the same bright streamlet. This court, unlike the other, was surrounded on all sides by buildings, between two of which was an arched gateway, with a large folding *porte cochère*, and, as in the little poultry yard through which they had come on their way, everything was as clean and neat as a lady's drawing-room. There was not a particle of litter or rubbish to be seen; no odoriferous goat was there, no fox chained to his rank kennel, no terrier prowling about, snapping and troublesome, the only quadruped in sight being a large tabby cat, blinking with her half-closed eyes, and purring to herself in silent satisfaction as she lay basking in the full sunshine on the top of the horse-block.

Exactly facing them as they entered was a long

building consisting of an open carriage-house, with an arched colonnade of unbarked cedar posts in front, with a hay-loft above it, surmounted by a small clock-house, with a weather-cock and vane; at either end projecting some twelve feet in advance of the carriage house, was a wing of twenty feet front, with a door five feet wide of stout oak studded with nail heads, and a handsome window. Each of these wings, which were only of a single story, had an open cupola above it with movable venetian blinds, admitting a free circulation of fresh air.

Toward the right of these wings Archer took his way, and lifting the heavy latch, entered a passage six feet wide by twelve in length, neatly paved, with a large stable lamp swinging from the roof.

To the right of this was the grain room, its window protected by a wire grating, and all the walls, floor, and interior of the binns lined with sheet-iron.

"All snug and tight, Fred," said Harry, as he pointed it out to him—"no rats or mice here! Pretty good oats," he added, taking out a sample. "The best of North Rivers, but they are light as

compared with ours at home. These are what they call very heavy here, nine-and-thirty pounds the bushel."

"The devil! do you call that *heavy*?"

"Yes, faith! exceeding heavy!—We have none of your fifty pound oats, we don't manure liberally enough for that; but come—here are the prads."

He threw open the second door, and the stable was before them, a square space of twenty feet, with four stalls occupying the whole length of the wall facing them—four stalls handsomely filled by the round powerful quarters and square docks of four as spicy cobs as ever did their mile in three minutes—two blacks, and two bright glossy chestnuts.

Their sheets of clean white holland; their woolen blankets checked with a yellow line, bordered with blue, and with blue initials; their poitrels of the same, and their hoods, knowingly folded back over their gay surcingles, were the perfection of cleanliness and good taste.

The floor paved with bricks set edgewise was actually redolent of cleanliness. The beds were laid down with a neatly plaited border; and over every stall hung an elaborate wreath of straws

destined to allure any wandering fly—vain destination! for the deuce a fly was to be seen or heard in that abode of nattiness.

The horses had been fed and littered down, and the venetian blinds were therefore closed; but enough of light penetrated, with the air, through the shutters of the ventilator in the roof, to allow all the details to be seen, even to the smallest.

As they came in, one of the black cobs turned his head and whinnied; and at the sound the others rattled their blocks and running halters, and looked, with some token or other of recognition, at their master.

“ Ah! you rogues, I must not forget you,” said Harry; and turning back into the grain room he brought a few bits of carrot, which lay ready to his hand in a barrel, and fed them severally, clapping their smooth and well-groomed necks, with this choicest of equestrian dainties.

“ Where is your hay, Harry? you have no loft overhead, I see!”

“ No! indeed. The hay is over the carriage house. There is no greater mistake in the world than to put your hay and grain *over* a stable, where all the fetor and ammonia must rise and impregnate the food with insalubrious stench.

No, indeed, nothing but the fresh air above, and a constant change of that. Now then, let us go to the other wing. See here," he continued, as he entered it, "here is my harness and saddle room, with a furnace and boiler for hot water—and here," passing through the vestibule—six feet, by twelve, like that on the other side—"here are the boxes for the thoroughbreds. This is Frank Forester's 'Bright Selim,' and a beauty he is with his rich chestnut coat and mouse-coloured muzzle; and that is my 'Bay Trojan;' you have not seen him yet. Tell me, Fred, did you ever see a finer quarter, a more richly shaped gambril—a more sloping shoulder? What a round barrel too! and look at his chest! Plenty of room for the bellows in that chest, eh, Fred?—Good arm, short cannon bone!—What fault can you find with him?"

"None, by the Lord! He is a superb colt. How is he bred?"

"By Priam, out of Betsy Richards by Sir Archy. There is no better blood in America."

"He ought to run."

"He would, I have no doubt. But he has never been in training. I bought him young at a very big figure, for his shapes; and as I cannot afford the luxury of racing, I have eschewed training him."

" You were wise, I suppose—yet I think I should have risked being tempted."

" Not I. I want him for a riding horse, not for a racer; the two are incompatible."

" Even so. Where are the dogs? Let us have a look at them, and then to breakfast."

" This way then."

And leaving the stable court by the side door, they went out into the oak grove, through which they walked a couple of hundred yards to the skirt of a green meadow, and there they found the kennel.

It was a neat wooden building of two apartments, the outer one paved with brick and opening upon a green court some twenty yards square, with a branch of the little brook, which was dammed above to supply the poultry yard and stable, meandering through it. Within was a second room furnished with wooden beds supplied sparingly with clean wheaten straw, and a stove in the centre, protected by a grated fender or cage reaching nearly to the ceiling.

The dogs—two brace and a half of superb setters, two black with tan spots above their eyes—two red, of Lord Clare's famous Irish breed—one liver and white spotted—and a brace of strong

Blenheim spaniels—were rolling and playing on the grass, or swimming in the little stream, all looking fresh and vigorous and healthy.

"I give them a bit of fire at night, poor brutes, in this autumn weather. It is hard to send them shivering to a cold bed after a stiff day's work in the cold water of our swamps. Besides, a dog lasts as long again, when he is well cared for."

"Perfectly right, Harry—I never saw a more complete establishment for its size. But where are my pointers?"

"I was afraid they might get to fighting, so I had them put into a spare lodging which I have for puppies or bitches. Here it is, by the boiling room."

"And very well they look, poor lads," said Fred. "Good dog, Don! Good dog, Punch! should not you like to go out, old fellows?"

"You shall take them out one of these days, Fred; we will go down and shoot quail in the open fields in South Jersey—they will tell there. But hark! there goes the breakfast bell; and as there is a broiled wood-duck, celery fed, fresh reeking from the gridiron, it behoves us neither to let him grow cold, nor bide the brunt of Frank Forester's fine morning appetite."

CHAPTER VIII.

COMING EVENTS CAST THEIR SHADOWS BEFORE.

HARRY's prediction *was* well nigh accomplished, *would* have been altogether, had they suffered five ninutes longer to elapse before they turned home-ward from the kennel; for, when they reached the dining-room Frank was established, as large as life, at the breakfast-table, with half a wood-duck on his plate, a cup of black tea at his right-hand, and Timothy at his elbow, grinning from ear to ear at some one of his favourite's witticisms.

"Just as I thought, Fred!" exclaimed Harry—"all the broiled duck gone, I'll be bound."

"Only half, only half of it, Harry, and I sent word to Mrs. Deighton to put the other on the gridiron at once, just to save time."

"Wonderful!" said Archer.

"What's wonderful?"

"That Frank Forester should have thought of anybody but himself, so long as there was anything good before him."

"Do you call this good?"—he replied, holding up a morsel of the juicy broil on the point of his fork.

"Not having tasted it, I cannot say. I should bet upon it though, by the way you are tucking into it."

"One must eat something."

"There's a cold quail pie on the side-board, a buffalo's tongue, and the sirloin."

"Yes; but they are cold."

"And so the duck is bad is it, Frank?" said Fred Heneage, sitting down to the well covered board. "I had rather not take your word for it."

"Not bad exactly—a thought underdone perhaps," said Forester, who never praised anything.

"Not exactly!" said Fred—"upon my word, it is delicious. Is this the bird you and the Patriot-man are fighting about?"

"Skirmishing,—only skirmishing! I wish he would send me down a few brace of his sand-hill cranes or a few couple of the blue-winged teal on which he brags so confidently. I dare say, as I

observed last night, they are more delicate on the fresh water. Ha! what is this?" he continued, as the boy Dick brought in a pretty little note, upon a silver waiter, and presented it to his master—"Who brought that, Dick?"

"Mrs. D'Arcey's man, sir."

"Ha! you're in luck, Fred; it must be an invite. Exactly!" he continued, as he opened the note, and skimmed the contents—"compliments, Mr. Archer—this evening—coffee—happy to see his friend Mr. Heneage, Mr. Forester, too—Ha, ha! that's not so bad, upon my soul!—if it were any use to ask him, but as I have quite made up my mind never to do so any more, pray tell him from me that I beg he will not *fatigue* himself, by coming to what I think I can hear him calling that terrible old woman's tea fight."

"She's not a terrible old woman at all—I'll be hanged if I ever said so"—exclaimed Frank, energetically—"not a bit of it, she's a very good old thing indeed, an excellent old thing!—I'll go for one, Harry, that's a dead fact!"

"No, will you, Forester, indeed?" said Archer; "that's something new for you, such a woman hater—"

“*Lady* hater, *fine lady* hater! if you please, Master Harry—yes, I do most cordially detest your genuine New York fine lady, that’s a fact, who is much too genteel to know anything, or do anything, or even open her mouth to say anything—whose highest idea of society is to gather eight or ten grinning counter-jumpers, without one idea beyond the tie of a gold and silver cravat, about her; whose highest ambition is to have a more elegant pocket handkerchief than Miss Tare-and-Tret—who says ‘sir’ at every sentence, giggles at every word, and if a man of sense speaks to her, looks on it as an act of great presumption on his part. I do hate *ladies*, as they call themselves; but a good honest, open-hearted, frank, natural, *very woman*, I adore, I revere, I—”

“Hold hard, hold hard, Frank!” said Harry, laughing; “if all these raptures are intended for my little friend Maria, they are thrown away pitifully, for she is bespoken!”

“Tush, tush!” laughed Forester, in answer; “a little saucy, blue-eyed, curly-pated chit like that a woman! a school girl more likely, fit only to be marking samplers. No, no! it is the dear good old thing, I mean. Upon my soul, if it

were not for having those two great awkward bouncing misses calling me Pa, I don't know but what

‘I'd put it to the touch,
To win or lose it all.’

as gallant Montrose said or sang of old.”

“It would be to no purpose, she would not have you, Frank. But what say you, will you go indeed? What say you, Fred?”

“Indeed will I,” said Forester; “I would not miss my game of piquet for a thousand with my venerable lady love.”

“We can hardly refuse, I should think;” said Heneage, sipping his tea, and affecting to speak indifferently, as if he did not care a farthing whether they went or not. “They must know that we can possibly have no other engagement, here in the country.”

“Oh! you need be under no restraint about that,” said Harry, casting a waggish glance toward Forester; “we are under no rules of strict formality here, in the first place; and, as I give dinners now and then, they cannot tell that I am not expecting friends. So, if you think it a bore, as I dare say you do, for there will be no one but

the two girls and ourselves, except the old lady, you can stay at home with fat Tom and myself, and let Frank go to 'the Elms' alone."

"Why, do you not mean to go?" asked Heneage.

"Just as you please," answered Harry, determined to let it rest with Fred himself. "I thought, by your manner, you did not care about it, except as a point of ceremony, in which case—"

"What the deuce is the sense of all this coquetting and nonsense?" said Frank Forester, half laughing, half provoked; "you both of you intend to go, as you know perfectly well; and, as there is no reason why you should not like to go and flirt with two very pretty girls, I cannot conceive why you don't say so. Look, here comes old Tom, rattling across the bridge with his big mags, and we have no time to lose if we are to shoot to-day; sit down quick, and write your acceptance."

"That is soon done," said Harry, going to the writing table and inditing a note, which as soon as it was finished he handed to Dick, saying, "Give that to John, and thank you, tell Timothy

to let him have a horn of whiskey, and then I want to speak to Timothy."

There was a moment's silence while they were lighting their cheroots, and then Archer began again.

"I've been thinking, boys, that it will be our better way, instead of taking luncheon with us, and coming back to a late hot dinner, which will lose us lots of time, as we must be home to dress at seven o'clock, to have a regular cold dinner sent out to the Eagle rock at four o'clock, by which time we shall have got through the cream of our shooting. What do you say?"

"A capital plan, by Jove!" said Forester; "but is there time to get up a cold dinner?"

"That quail pie has not been cut, and the inroad on that sirloin is small; there is a cold tongue, and a Strasbourg *pâté de foie gras*, and *sardines*, if that will serve you."

"What you say right is perfectly true."

"Then hark you, Timothy; Dick will go with us to the cover, and bring the carriage back. You will pack up all the things that I have named, with all else requisite for a regular good cold dinner; take lots of salad along with you,

and, by the way, you may take a pot and boil some potatoes. Four bottles of the dry champagne, two of the pale sherry, and the brandy for Tom—and let all be ready at four punctually. We will go in Mr. Draw's wagon, and I shall want the two black horses at seven before the big wagon; I am going to pass the evening at the Elms."

"Aye, aye, sir; Ay'se hae 't all raight, Ay'se oophaud it!" responded Timothy; and at the same time Draw's stentorian voice thundered from without.

"Come, look alive, or I'll be arter you to-rights, you darned eternal snoopin' laziest sort o' critters!"

CHAPTER IX.

THE ELMS.

THE Elms, like Harry Archer's Shooting Box, from which it was but two miles distant, had been originally a mere country farm house. It was now, if such a paradox be permissible, at once far more and far less pretending than the snuggery of that worthy. Far more pretending as a house, far less pretending as a place.

For though it was at least three times the size of Harry's box, and could boast its music room, its conservatory, and its half-dozen of spare bedrooms, it had neither the park-like woods, extensive lawn and wild shrubberies, nor the capacious offices and outbuildings, which rendered the other so complete, as a bachelor's ménage.

It was a low long irregular stone building, the windows of which had been altered and enlarged into venetian doors of plate glass, with several additions of rooms and bay windows, thrust for-

ward here and there, without any regard to the original design, giving it a quaint and picturesque aspect, which was greatly increased by a broad green verandah running around the whole house, and following all its salient corners.

The house stood, as is unfortunately the case with most rural buildings in this country, within twelve or fourteen feet of the road-side, and, consequently, there was no space for any shrubbery or ornamental garden between the low green fence and the verandah, which was completely overrun with vines and sweet-scented creepers.

In front, however, of that low green fence bordering the gravel causeway of the high road there stood—what in older countries would have been esteemed a rare and invaluable ornament to the most lordly dwelling—five elm trees of that beautiful variety which lends so rare a charm, by the long aisles of their weeping verdure, to some of the New England villages.

Behind the house, at the distance of a few hundred feet, the same clear brook which ran through Archer's grounds flowed deep and placid, dividing a beautiful terraced garden, with trim hawthorn hedges, and many a bowery alcove,

from a soft green meadow bordered with weeping willows.

It was in a room overlooking this flowery slope, a room with a low ceiling and two old-fashioned embrasures with deep bay windows, that the three ladies were assembled, awaiting the arrival of Harry and his blythe companie.

Nothing could be plainer than the furniture, pretty chintz sofas and settees, and tables of domestic woods, oak and curled maple highly polished; but at the same time nothing could be in better taste, more elegant, or more indicative of the usages of the best society. Nothing appeared to be designed for show; nothing but seemed to be placed there for daily use, from the cabinet pianoforte, and handsome harp, to the embroidery frame, the water-colour drawing half finished on its easel, the prettily bound books scattered in bright profusion on the tables, and the superb exotics blooming in rare porcelain vases, the only costly ornaments of that pleasant room.

Nor was the aspect of the ladies, who sat there expectant of the coming guests, other than that which a man of the world would have

expected from the mute evidences of taste and high refinement.

The old lady, who was indeed far more advanced in years than could have been supposed from the appearance of her younger daughter, and who wore her own silver hair smoothly braided across a clear and solid brow, under a snow-white toque or turban, was one of those fine aristocratic relics of times now almost forgotten, which we so seldom meet in this sordid every day world of ours.

Her figure was still fine and graceful, though bowed somewhat by years, and yet more by cares and sorrows; but her features, which had been once eminently handsome—although the flashing and vivacious light of happiness and hope had for ever left them, although the fresh hues of youth had faded, never to bloom again on her pale transparent cheek—were still high and noble, and unaltered in their expression of every generous thought and every gentle sentiment that can adorn a woman.

The elder daughter, who, though extremely pretty, was somewhat delicate in health, and of feebler constitution than her fair joyous sister,

was lying with a shawl thrown across her knees upon a couch beside the wood fire, which the keen air of the autumnal evening rendered agreeable, while her mother read aloud in a rich harmonious voice one of Longfellow's noble ballads, lowering the magazine at times, to make some passing comment, or criticism, more deep than would be generally looked for from a lady, upon the exquisite art which lay, concealed by yet greater art, in the seeming simplicity, and apparently unpremeditated numbers of "the Belfry of Bruges."

Meanwhile Maria, looking a thousand times more lovely than she had appeared when she half captivated Fred Heneage in her close fitting riding habit, with her rich auburn ringlets now falling in long soft masses over the dazzling contour of her dimpled falling shoulders, her fairy waist spanned by a broad blue sash, and all the wavy outlines of her rich rounded figure enhanced by the full draperies of her muslin dress, was flitting to and fro, employed in some gentle household duties, dispensing light and music from her sunny eyes, and the low tones of her soft voice, wherever she turned her steps.

The lamps had not been long lighted, and were

burning in their opaque globes of ground glass with that faint and uncertain silvery lustre, which is so much more delightful in a small room and domestic circle, than the bright glare of many lights, when the roll of carriage wheels might be heard approaching the outer door, and stopping short under the Elm trees.

"Here they are at length," said the elder lady ; "I had almost given them up."

"I had not, then, Mamma," said Maria ; "for Mr. Archer is the most punctual person in the world ; and always keeps his word. I am sure, too, that something has happened now, more than usual, to delay him."

As she spoke, Archer entered the room with Forester and Fred Heneage, the latter of whom, as a stranger, he introduced to Mrs. D'Arcey, who met him with an extended hand and a pleasant smile, and said some gay good-humoured words in reference to the service he had rendered Maria on the previous day, which led to a response in the like tone from Heneage ; and in a moment the whole party were as much at their ease, as if they had been acquainted for a year.

It would not, however, have required the

acquaintance of a year to discover that Archer's face was a good deal paler than usual, and that his manner—*his* who was under all ordinary circumstances so calm and impassive—betrayed the remains of some powerful excitement.

Maria, who had turned to him, while her mother was greeting Heneage, saying, “ You are a truant again, Mr. Archer, and again I have had the task of defending——” stopped short in the middle of her sentence, and interrupted herself, crying with something like anxiety of manner, but trying to appear in jest—

“ But good heaven ! what is the matter with you ? your lips are as pale as if you had seen a ghost, and your hand is trembling, you who never tremble at anything. Are you ill ?—will you have some wine ? ”

“ If he is trembling, my dear ladies,” said Forester, who, though also somewhat fluttered, maintained his ready wit and gay impudence unaltered —“ he can reply to you exactly in the converse of poor Bailly’s reply to his executioners.”

“ What *can* you mean, Mr. Forester ? ”

“ He can say, It is not with *cold*, ladies, but with *fear* ! ”

"Upon my word, you are too bad! But he will kill you for it, I am certain, and that is a comfort."

"Kill me, indeed!—I should like to see him try it."

"Oh! yes, I dare say. I have no doubt you are a great coward, Mr. Forester," said the elder girl, "because you are such a braggart. Now I, who am such a poor weak wretch, am in reality much braver than Maria, who is always laughing at danger—when she is really afraid of everything."

"I!"—exclaimed Maria—"why Jane, what a story! I am not afraid of anything."

"What do you say to a cow, Maria?" said Archer, who was so much a privileged person that he always called the girls by their Christian names.

"Oh! I forgot the cow," answered Maria, laughing—"I am afraid I must plead guilty to the cow."

"You are not in earnest!" said Heneage, who seemed anxious to change the conversation.

"I am, indeed; do you despise me very much? If you do, I can't help it; for I always tell the

truth, and I am a little bit afraid of a cow—but only of a cow—of nothing else, I assure you."

"Of a horse you are certainly not afraid," said Heneage, in a lower voice, and with one of those deep glances, dwelling upon her lovely and ingenuous features, full of the warmest admiration. "I never saw so perfect a horsewoman."

"Ah! now, you have some bad end in view," she returned with a smile, shaking her head, "since you are beginning to flatter me on my weak point; but I see your drift, and it shall not succeed. You want to divert me from my *previous question*,—what was the matter with Mr. Archer that he looked so strangely; and what Mr. Forester meant by saying it was *fear*."

"It is a very strange thing, Miss Maria D'Arcey, that so truthful a young lady as you are, can give no one credit for truth but yourself. I meant, as I always do mean, just simply what I said—that it was with fear, not with cold, that Mr. Harry Archer, the object of your intense solicitude, is shaking like a weathercock in a north-easter, and as pale as a sheet."

"And I don't believe one word of it," she answered, glancing from one to the other of the

party, of whom Heneage appeared considerably the most confused ; but I must know—I *will* know. I am a spoiled girl, am I not, mamma ? and I always have my own way, do I not ? ”

“ Generally, I believe, Maria,” said her mother, with a fond glance at her lovely child ; “ but in this case I must confess as great a curiosity as yours. For I do not think Mr. Forester is quizzing altogether ; and yet I do not believe, any more than you, in Mr. Archer’s being afraid. There is something strange in all this, and you had really better tell us, or we shall all of us fancy that it is something stranger than it really is.”

“ The only way is to ask Mr. Archer directly,” said Maria ; “ for I don’t believe he knows how to tell a story. Is it fear, Mr. Archer ? ”

“ Which made me pale ? ” answered Harry, with a grave smile. “ I am afraid that, even at the expense of jeopardizing your good opinion, I must reply, Ay.”

“ Fear ! ” exclaimed Maria emphatically. “ Fear, and you ! Then it was not fear for yourself, I am certain.”

“ I thank you for your certainty—it was not.”

“ Pray tell us now, and no more mystery,”

said Mrs. D'Arcey, "for we are too impatient to give you any coffee till we are relieved from suspense, and I know Mr. Forester wants his revenge of me at piquet, and he shall not be gratified, till you have told us."

"Well, if I must, I must," he added. "But first let me tell you not to be alarmed, for no harm has been done at all, though there was certainly a good deal of danger, enough as you see to frighten me some hours ago, so that I have not yet fully got over it."

"Oh! tell us! tell us!"

"Well, we set out to shoot this morning, if you must know, up the valley of what they call the Black creek, up to the Eagle rock, which, if you remember, overlooks the stream from a considerable height, and has a fine view over the mill-pond above, and the dark channel hemmed in by the rocks below. Timothy was to meet us there with some cold dinner in order to save time, after which we proposed to drive home so as to have leisure to dress coolly, and come to you punctually. But the fates ordered it otherwise. We had a fine day's sport, reached our appointed place, made a good dinner, and were smoking our cigars

calmly on the rock, a hundred feet above the stream, which was quite clear and shallow, with the big boulder stones all bare and dry in its bed, when all on a sudden, we heard a deep hollow moaning sound, and a great gush of white muddy water came surging down the channel, bearing a quantity of broken timbers down before it. We were on our feet in a moment, all suspecting what had happened, though by no means suspecting to what extent—that the mill-dam had given way. A few steps brought us to a place whence we could see; and surely enough the dam, at which some clumsy millwright had been at work, had given way; there was a wide breach in it even then, and the waters were widening it every moment; and what with the roar of the cataract, and the crash of the beams, and the sullen gurgling of the great eddies in the pool below the wheel, and down the channel, I never saw or heard a more frightful scene in my life. We had not stood there five seconds, before the door of the mill was thrown open, and poor old Dame Anderson, the miller's wife, came rushing out of it with her gray hair streaming in the wind, and screaming for help in mortal terror.

At first I could not see the danger ; but she had doubtless felt the yielding of the timbers ; for she had scarcely reached the middle of the small wooden bridge which crosses the mill race from the door, before, one after another, with crash and groan, the lower timbers settled down into the torrent ; the mill was swept down the fall over the rocks, and, after blocking the passage for a moment or two, and damming the waters back to the foot of the fall, was broken into a thousand fragments, and swept piecemeal down the stream. In the meantime the poor old woman's situation was truly perilous. The first arch of the bridge had been swept away with the house, and by the shock the ends of the planks which join the shore had been loosened, so that the centre on which she stood, alone remained entire, and that swayed perilously to and fro among the whirling eddies. I turned away and ran as hard as I could to the boat which lay moored not ten yards distant, trusting that I might stem the current above the broken dam, and so rescue her ; but I had not taken ten steps before I heard a wild yell, and in an instant the bridge fell, and she was plunged into the water and carried over the fall, in less time than it has taken me to tell you."

"Great God! How terrible!"

"But you saved her—you saved her—I know you did, Mr. Archer," exclaimed Maria, her bright eyes glistening with enthusiasm; "I know you saved her! Say that you did."

"She was saved," replied Archer gravely, "God be praised for it! but it was not by me."

"Oh! go on, go on, Mr. Archer. I do not wonder that you were *shocked*, not afraid. Afraid is not the word for what you felt, at all. Go on, and tell us."

"Happily the waters were so heaped in the gorge below, that the fall was now not above two feet high, instead of being ten or twelve, so that the poor old woman was swept over it unharmed; and yet more happily, she had caught in her struggles a piece of timber, which partially supported her. Still she was in the most imminent peril, for the beam to which she clung was dashed every moment against the rocks, and the loss of a minute would have rendered her case hopeless."

"But—" asked Maria, eagerly.

"But how I cannot tell you; for I cannot now conceive how the foot or hand of man could scale the rocks that wall that channel. Fred Heneage rushed to the brink, threw himself over

it, and the next instant we saw him struggling in those fearful eddies."

"And he saved her?"

"He did indeed, and most gallantly!"

"How fine! how generous! how noble!" exclaimed the spirited and artless girl. "God bless you for it, Mr. Heneage—God *will* bless you for it!" And she burst into a flood of passionate convulsive tears. But mastering herself in a moment, she wiped them away, and cried, with a lovely smile breaking through them, like a sunbeam through an April shower, "See what a little fool I am! But beautiful things like this always make me cry, and this is too beautiful."

"It was beautiful, indeed," said Forester, who was affected in spite of his half assumed levity. "And he as nearly lost his life by it as possible; for when we got down to the water's edge, though he had steered the beam and the old dame into the shallows, where she was safe, he had himself sunk quite exhausted."

"And would inevitably have been drowned," added Heneage, who had appeared very much embarrassed during the whole narration, "if it had not been for the courage of Frank Forester

and Harry Archer, who, though they make such a stir about a little thing on the part of another, never say a word about themselves. They dived for me in the pool three or four times, and at last brought me up alive as you see."

"And kicking!" added Forester.

"It is of no use to try to make a hero of me in the business," said Harry; "I alone, have no share in the glory. Frank would have been drowned too, if it had not been for Tom Draw, who is stronger than a hippopotamus and swims twice as well, and lugged us all out; but it was Frank who saved Heneage."

"Of course I must be dragged before the world like a bull-dog!" exclaimed Frank.

"Like a what?"

"Heavens! what a simile!"

"Never mind the simile," said Frank, whose end was gained, when the subject of the conversation was changed; "but for heaven's sake give me some coffee, for it is cold that makes *me* shake, I assure you; I was much too hard-hearted to be afraid for any body but myself, let alone a very ugly old woman. Do pray give me some coffee, Mrs. D'Arcey, and then let me beat you at piquet."

"After that, I do not very well know what happened," wrote Frank Forester, in after days, describing subsequent events to a friend in England; "but when I had lost about seven successive games, I thought the room was very quiet; and, looking up, I perceived that Julia D'Arcey had fallen fast asleep, while Harry was sketching terriers' heads with a pen and ink on sundry sheets of note paper; and that Maria was sitting in an arm-chair, with her eyes very bright, her cheeks and neck very rosy, and her manner very tremulous, conversing in a very low tone with Master Fred, who was leaning over her, as he stood by the mantelpiece, and who had already broken into the smallest conceivable pieces a superb Louis Quatorze fan, and strewed the carpet with the fragments.

"Seeing how the cat jumped, though I was very tired of being repiqued and capotted, I went on playing, 'like a bull-dog,' till at last, by the grace of heaven, Julia awoke from her nap, and asked us to go in to supper."

CHAPTER X.

A PALAVER.

THREE weeks had passed instead of a few days, since the arrival of Fred Heneage at the Shooting Box. Yet he had shown no indication of getting tired of the monotony of the Warwick Woodlands.

It could not have been the shooting altogether, which attracted him in the first instance, that now detained him; for, although he did occasionally don the shooting jacket, and do his devoir among the quail and woodcock, he more frequently suffered those indefatigable Nimrods, Harry and Frank, to fill the ample bag unaided, while, smitten with an unusual taste for solitary rides, he would back Harry's bay Trojan, and loiter away afternoon and afternoon, day after day, among the lone green lanes that intersect those lovely meads and woodlands.

It was, however, a little singular, that though he ever set forth alone, he more than frequently rode homeward in company; and that in which

ever direction his horse's head was turned at starting, it was invariably at the "Elms," that he drew bridle.

In one word, Fred Heneage was as fairly caught, as ever was any son of Adam, by a pair of bright eyes, a delicate wit, and a soft heart.

"In short," said Frank to Harry, as they came home one night from the Hell-hole swamp with eight-and-thirty couple of *Fall* cock, and a brace of very tired setters—"in short, it is devilish clear, that within a few weeks more or less, we shall see him dragged, like a bull-dog, before the hymenial altar. I only wish he could have 'the Duke' to give her away. He has given away a dozen or two of American girls this season, besides all the Britishers."

"It is no joke, Frank," said Harry, seriously. "It is, as you say, quite plain that there is a strong mutual liking; and my good old friend is, as plainly, well pleased with it; but I think there will be mischief yet!"

"How so?" said Frank.

"If Theodore D'Arcey comes back from Chicago before it is all arranged—ay, and all concluded too—mark my words, it will be broken

off. Had he been at home, it would have been at an end long ago; or rather it never would have begun. I wish he would speak to me about it."

"Why don't you speak with him?"

"To say the truth, I am shy of it. He never gives me a chance, but seems to avoid the subject. Has he ever hinted anything to you?"

"Never a word," said Forester; "do you think he has fully made up his mind about it?"

"He must, Frank. He is too honourable a fellow to have carried it so far, unless he had done so. She is as much in love as he is, that is clear. By Jove! I wish I could do something to bring it to a close one way or other."

"Give a pic-nic; I will take care of Julia. Do you pin the old woman, and he is sure to propose. People always propose at pic-nics."

"Egad! you are right enough there, Master Frank; but as yet, I hardly think it would do."

"Then why bother your head about it? Let every man manage his own mare, as the Scotchman has it."

"I don't know," answered Harry, thoughtfully. "I don't know; but I hardly see how I can do otherwise. Yet, I confess, I am more anxious in

this matter, than ever I was in all my life before. Fred Heneage is not a fellow to be affected lightly by this sort of thing ; and if it should go wrong with him, it will make his whole life wretched ; and she too, she is a girl I can almost fancy a man's going mad for."

" Do you know, Harry, I have often wondered, so much of your time as you pass with them, that you have never ——"

" Frank ! don't, for G—d's sake ! you hurt me !" said Archer, in an altered tone, with an indescribable expression crossing his face, and leaving him very pale.

Forester looked at him steadily for a moment, in great wonder, and then, very much embarrassed and half stammering, replied—

" I beg your pardon, my dear fellow. Upon my soul, I did not mean ——"

" I know you did not, old friend," answered Harry, hastily, " and I am but a fool. But let us speak of Fred."

" Ah ! well !" replied Forester, collecting his ideas a little. " But I cannot see what you should be so anxious about. If they want to be married, they will be married of course. There is nothing to hinder them."

“ Her brother ! Frank.”

“ What the deuce can he do in the matter ? or if he could, why should he interfere ?”

“ Fred is an Englishman.”

“ Pshaw ! an Englishman of an excellent old family, of unblemished character, a steady fellow, with eight thousand a year in his own right, and one of the prettiest places in the West Riding ! I never heard such stuff. As if he were not a match for any one in the world, let alone a little girl, with nothing under the sun but a very pretty face for her fortune.”

“ You do not know Theodore D’Arcey.”

“ No, God be praised for that same ! But I have heard that he is a shrewd, clever, cunning man, with a sharp eye to the main chance. Now he must be none of this, but a fool or a madman, to refuse such an alliance for his sister.”

“ He is all that you have heard. Yet if he hear of their attachment in time, he will not only refuse, but prevent it. He is a man, in my opinion, capable of anything that should not bring him into collision with the law.”

“ But why ? men do not let their prejudices war with their interests ; particularly such men as he. Why should he wish to hinder it ?”

“ Because it is not for *his* interest that she should marry an English gentleman. To have her the wife of an American millionaire, a New York hunk of a merchant, who had made six millions in ship-chandlery or the like, who spells soap ‘ *sope*; ’ and on the strength of the spelling, or the money, is president of some grand literary institution — that indeed would strengthen his hand mightily ! or, if not that, the wife of some political roarer, some puller of the cabinet strings , or even, in default of all, to have her Theodore D’Arcey’s beautiful sister : any of these things would add something to his own self-importance. To see her the wife of an aristocrat, on the contrary, a feudal tyrant and oppressor, would cast a doubt on his consistency with the choice spirits of ward meetings, and bar-caucuses, whose ‘ most sweet voices ’ he aspires to gain.”

“ A pretty pup, indeed, you describe him ! But if all this were true, he is not the girl’s father. How can he hinder it ? ”

“ The house in which they live — all, with trifling exception, that they have to live upon — is his ! ”

“ And would he resort to such measures ? ”

"I believe him capable of resorting to any."

"It has a bad look."

"It has indeed. And to add to all the rest, he hates me with a hatred so deadly and so overpowering, that, had he no other cause than that hatred, and his knowledge that Fred and I are friends, he would move heaven and earth therefore to thwart him."

"It has a bad look, as I said before. But I still think you must let them bide their time. You will only make a mess of it, if you stir prematurely."

"I believe you are right. But look there! by Jove, Frank, those dogs are making game!—it must be quail running. We have got time yet before it grows dark to use up the bevy. Step up quickly, man, they are running fast, and will scarce lie hard in this stubble."

"Toho! there they are staunch," answered Forester; and they moved forward quickly.

"Take heed, sir! Have a care, Sancho!" cried Archer, sternly, as the old red dog drew forward a few paces uneasily.

"Be sure that you mark the birds if any go to your right hand." As he spoke a large bevy rose

at long distance, and towering up high against the darkening sky, loomed larger than their real size, in the fast falling twilight.

Archer, unlike his wont, fired the first; for they got up wild, and were flying fast, and wheeling round Frank to the right. Whether the darkness was the cause, or the rapidity of his aim, he missed his first barrel, but cut down a bird with the second, out of the middle of the bevy; two or three of the other birds cringing and lagging in their flight, as the shot rattled on their wings.

Forester discharged both his barrels, killing two birds with the first, and making a clear miss with the second.

“All’s right,” cried Archer, as soon as the shots had ceased to re-echo from the woodlands. “They are all down in the bushes along the little stream yonder, and it is so late in the evening now, that they will begin calling directly, and running together. Hark! they are at it, already.”

“We had better get round by the crossing pole,” said Frank; “they are all on the farther side, and then we shall have them, as they rise against the bright western sky, instead of their flushing toward that big blue hill.”

"Right, for a thousand, Frank. But pull foot, man alive, for it will be dark in half-an-hour."

Five minutes had not passed before they reached the crossing log, which spans the little brook ; the dogs bounded over it as briskly as though they had not appeared, half-an-hour before, to be utterly fagged out and spiritless.

Frank followed them across the rough hickory log, but Harry stood firm with his gun ready on the near side.

And it was very well that he did so, for Forester had not taken three steps on the farther bank, before both the dogs stood stiff, and three birds rose out of a thorn-bush on the stream's brink. Then it was that Frank's sportsmanlike instinct told. For compelled as they were to rise between the sportsman and the red gleam, which was fast dying out in the western horizon, the birds afforded him a fair mark, and he keeled a brace of them over neatly right and left, while Harry cut down the third as he crossed him, a beautiful quick shot. Just as he fired, a fourth bird flushed, just at his feet, on his own side of the stream, and flew down it, pointing rather toward the dark eastern hill, and skimming very low, close to the surface of

the brown withered grass. The shades of night blended so completely the colours of the game with those of the sere herbage, that even the keen eye of Archer failed to discern its outline ; yet, though almost despairing of getting a shot, he stood attentive and on the alert, with his thumb on the hammer of his gun, watching the bright surface of the stream, upon which all the light of the sky seemed to be concentrated, with a faint hope that the bird might cross it.

He was just lowering his butt hopelessly, when, at some twenty yards aloof, he caught the dark outline of a wing whirring across the bright and silent mirror.

His gun rose quick as thought to his shoulder, a bright ruddy flash gleamed on the dusky scene, and the shot pattered like a hail storm on the tranquil reach of the brook.

“Did you kill him, Harry ?”

“I don’t know. It was guess work. But I think I did—yes ! I did—I hear him flapping on the water. Fetch him, good dog. I have got him, Frank, and my first and your second bird. Go on, be quick.”

In a minute more three more birds rose, and

two flying up against the sky were killed instantly. The third, hovering low along the ground, got off without a shot.

Then two or three stole away like the last, unseen and unshot at, and detected only by the quick whir of their wings, and Archer was in the act of saying—"Well, Frank, I believe we must give it up; it has grown too dark altogether"—when one of the dogs ran in upon the mass of the bevy, and flushed them all up, terrified and in great confusion. For one second only their outlines were drawn clearly against the last glimmer of the sunset; but in that second's space four barrels were discharged almost simultaneously, and several birds fell, undistinguishable in the gloom.

Some time was spent in searching for the dead and wounded, but at last, by aid of the sagacity of the dogs, four birds were brought to bag; and satisfied that there could be no more, and that these last were the result of a marvellous lucky chance shot, they gave it up.

"This is almost running the thing into the ground, Frank," said Harry.

"Yes, almost. But it was a very pretty little

rally while it lasted. How many did we get in all?"

"Let me see. Two at the first rise, then four, then two, and now to conclude, four, by good luck. Six brace in all."

"To be added to nineteen couple of cock, not a bad day's work."

And as he spoke they crossed the fence into the lane, and strode out homeward, at the rate of five miles the hour. They had not walked far on their way, before the sound of a horse at a gallop came rapidly down the road behind them.

"That is Fred, for a thousand! I know the long stroke of the thoroughbred, too well to be mistaken."

Nearer and nearer came the clanging stride, and now was close upon their heels.

"What ho! lads, is that you?" cried a joyous voice.

"Nobody else!" cried Archer.

"I thought so. I heard you cannonading a while since; and was pretty sure that no one else could be so insane as to shoot after what the good people call early candlelight. What were you shooting, owls or bats?"

"Quail, Fred. We marked a bevy down by accident, and used them up—"

"Considerably, as old Tom would say," added Forester.

"By accident too, I should think," said Fred.

"Pretty much so, I believe."

"But what is old Chance at? He has something in his mouth."

"The deuce he has!—Chance, Chance! Come here, good dog!" cried Harry. "By George! Forester, it is another quail. We must have knocked down five at that last volley, and this old villain has found it, and carried it all this way. Good dog! good dog!—poor fellow, Chance! poor fellow!"

"Has not he bitten it?"

"Not so much as a feather ruffed."

"Look here," said Heneage, "I will canter forward and tell them to have dinner ready. For I am hungry, in the first place, and in the second I want to talk to you a little while after dinner, Harry; and then I have some letters to write."

"Do so," said Archer, "I am your man;" and as he set spurs to the thoroughbred and galloped homeward at a rattling pace, Harry

turned round to Forester, and nodded his head, saying—

“ Ah ! that is well at last, he wants to speak to me, eh ? He shall have a word or two of my mind, I promise you. Look here, old fellow, after the wine is on the table, make some excuse or other to leave us to ourselves for an hour or two. I don’t think he will unburden himself before you.”

“ Oh ! never fear—never fear. I ’ll respect your mysteries,” answered Frank ; “ but come, come, let us step out now, or we ’ll never get home.”

In spite, however, of that ominous prediction, many minutes did not elapse before they reached the white gate of Harry’s neat demesne ; nor many more before the friends were seated at the table in the well-lighted dining room, enjoying a *potage de gibier à la Meg Merrilles*.

Before he sat down, however, Frank turned to Timothy and said, “ It is seven o’clock now, Tim ; I wish you would desire Dick to saddle ‘ Selim,’ and have him at the door at half-past eight.”

“ What the deuce now, Frank ? ” exclaimed Heneage.

"I promised to go down and have a jaw, and blow a cloud with old Tom, this evening. But I will be back before ten o'clock."

No more was said on that score, for Harry understood at once, and gave due credit to Frank's tact; and Fred Heneage thought how opportune it was, that Forester should be going out that evening. For he had not the slightest suspicion of his own transparency, and fancied, like many other very clever people, that because he had been *woodcocking*, as Harry called it, or poking his own head into a dark corner, nobody could see his tail.

The dinner was as good as usual, and went off, if possible, more gaily than its wont. The soup was succeeded by a *matelotte* of eels *a la tartar*, a rib of roast beef, a couple of wood-duck, and quails boiled with celery sauce.

The champagne was deliciously cold, and as lively as the humour of the guests, all of whom were somewhat extraordinarily merry. Fred Heneage well pleased at the prospects of his love affair; Harry delighted at the accomplishment of his prospects, and not unsatisfied with the prestige which a love match would give to his Shooting

Box ; and Forester enchanted at having something whereat to laugh in his sleeve, besides a good subject for malicious witticisms *in futuro*.

After his second glass of Latour, however, with a sly wink at Harry, he withdrew, and in a moment they heard the pebbles spurned up by the heels of his fleet horse.

An hour or two had passed before he returned, and when he did so, it was with an eye very moist and waggish, a cheek very rosy, a voice somewhat thicker than common, and a footstep which strove to conceal the slightest degree conceivable of unsteadiness, under a double allowance of jauntiness and elasticity.

Harry and Heneage had by this time withdrawn into the library ; and the former was sitting in his arm-chair by the fire, inhaling the fumes of his favourite cheroot, with a face of most humorous satisfaction with himself and all the world beside ; while his friend was busy at the writing-table, with two or three sealed letters before him, the fruit of his earnest industry.

“ Halloo ! Frank, the old story,” exclaimed Harry ; “ Potations pottle deep. Eh ? old cider sperrits, I suppose.”

"With two lumps of loaf-sugar, a nail's breadth of lemon peel, not a drop of acid, and the least thought of arrack—"

"Without any water, Frank?"

"With just as much water screeching hot, as there is *sperrit*," replied Forester.

"Good stuff for a fuddle, Frank?" asked Heneage, looking up from his writing, merrily.

"Excellent good!"

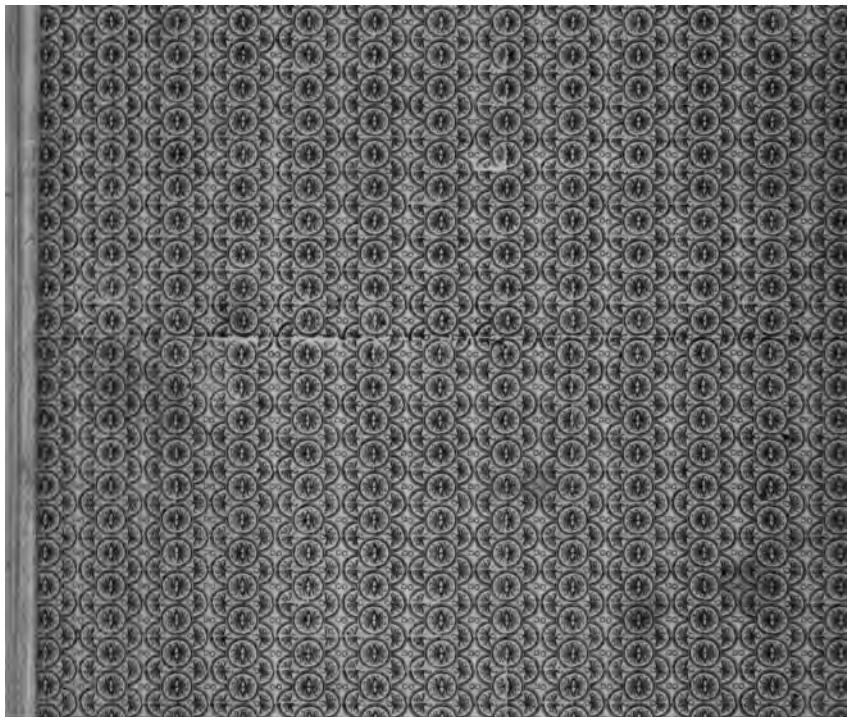
"How about gittin' sober on 't, little wax skin?" inquired Archer, with a ludicrous imitation of Tom Draw's tone and manner.

"About that," returned Frank, "I'll tell you more to-morrow morning. But what the deuce is all this about?" he added, in his natural tone, working his way, tack and tack, up to the writing table, and taking up one of the sealed letters.
"'To Thomas Colley Grattan, Her Majesty's Consul, Boston.'—'To Richard Pakenham, Esq., Her Majesty's Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary, &c. &c. &c. Washington.'—'To Messrs. Baring Brothers, London.'—Why, what the deuce is all this? are you a candidate for office? Why the devil don't you write to his Grace the Duke of Wellington? he is the head of the department Mat—"

"And thereupon," said Forester, in the same letter which has been quoted before, "I found myself mounted by that great robust beast Archer, and kicked into the hall, without being allowed to finish my sentence. When I poked my head into the room, which I did not dare to do for about twenty minutes, they were both laughing heartily, and invited me to a pic-nic, to come off in three days at the Greenwood Lake."

END OF VOL. II.





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